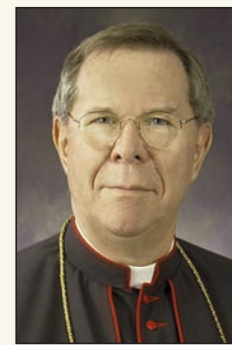




The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



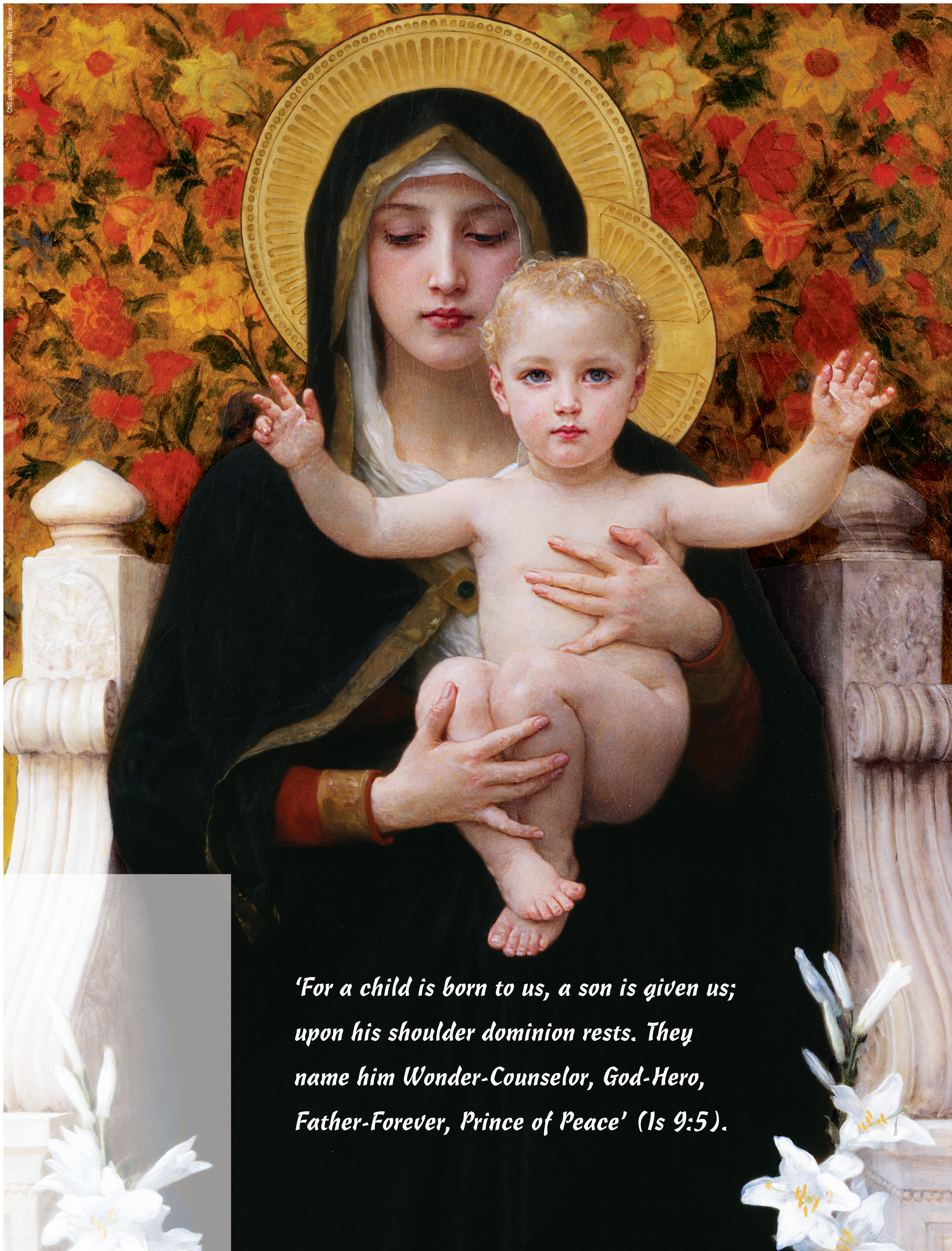
Seeking the Face of the Lord

Live gratefully for God and each other this Christmas, page 5.

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*'For a child is born to us, a son is given us;
upon his shoulder dominion rests. They
name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace' (Is 9:5).*

Seminary enrollment, charter schools top local news stories of 2010

By Brandon A. Evans

The 25-year high for enrollment at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, and the creation of two charter schools in Indianapolis were voted the top local news stories of 2010.

Working in tandem with the custom of other news agencies, including Catholic News Service, *The Criterion* editorial staff votes each year for the top 10 stories that were published in our newspaper.

Many of the stories selected this year were actually made up of several individual articles.

Amid the hundreds of locally produced news stories during 2010, here is our "Top 10" list:

1. Enrollment at Saint Meinrad Seminary reaches a 25-year high.

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology has 136 seminarians enrolled from 35 dioceses and religious communities this year, marking the largest class since 1985.

Only four years ago, the enrollment was 94, but the number of seminarians there has steadily increased during the last three years.

The large number of seminarians—including men from India, Korea and Vietnam—led Saint Meinrad to change the orientation of St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel to fit more students and to convert guest rooms to seminarian housing.

From our coverage by Sean Gallagher:

"Such growth ... surprised Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, Saint Meinrad's president-rector.

"According to Father Denis, there are several reasons for the growth in seminarian enrollment at Saint Meinrad—improved relationships with dioceses, strengthening of its priestly formation program, support given by the alumni of Saint Meinrad, a realignment of enrollment in seminaries across the country, and the closing and consolidating of some smaller seminaries.

"He also noted that there has been a general increase in the number of seminarians nationwide in recent years."

2. Archdiocese creates two charter schools.

From our staff report in April: "The archdiocese recently received approval to create two charter schools in Indianapolis—a move that will make it the first Catholic diocese in the United States that has committed to overseeing a school involved in this educational approach.

"When the 2010-11 school year opens in August, St. Anthony Catholic School and St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy will become charter schools. While they will still be managed by the archdiocese, they will have to change their names and they will no longer be able to promote the Catholic faith during school hours.

"The two schools are currently part of the six schools that form the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies—a consortium of schools created by the archdiocese to focus on educating students in urban areas of Indianapolis.

"The other four schools in the consortium—Central Catholic School, Holy Angels School, Holy Cross Central School and St. Philip Neri School—will continue as Catholic schools.

"Many urban Catholic schools are closing across the nation, and we did not want to leave the students or communities we currently serve," said Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general of the archdiocese. "Through this transformation, an urgent and unmet need within urban Indianapolis will be filled."

3. St. Anne Parish dedicates new church three years after arson fire.

St. Anne Church in New Castle was destroyed in an arson fire on April 7, 2007—Holy Saturday. Three years later, on Feb. 28, the rebuilt church was consecrated by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein.

Mary Ann Wyand reported the following in her news coverage: "Offering his congratulations and thanks to St. Anne parishioners for their patience, sacrifices and hard work, the archbishop said the dedication liturgy 'marks a joyful conclusion to the sadness and the anguish caused by the destructive fire in your church three years ago.'

"As parishioners celebrate the



Aaron Foshee, left, a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City studying at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, helps Archdiocese of Indianapolis seminarian Anthony Hollowell, right, move his belongings into the southern Indiana seminary on Aug. 26. The seminarian enrollment at Saint Meinrad is at a 25-year high this year.

dedication of their new church, the archbishop said, it is important to remember those ancestors of our faith who founded St. Anne Parish in New Castle in 1873 as well as the entire communion of saints.

"The history of every faith community is a pilgrimage often marked by challenges," Archbishop Buechlein said. "I doubt that the pastor and folks who founded your parish envisioned that someday we would have to experience a fire by arson."

"The new church has a statue of St. Anne and the Blessed Virgin Mary which survived the fire. The statue now includes a small plaque that reads: 'Tested in Fire. Strengthened in Faith.'"

4. The Office of Catholic Education hires a new director.

Harry Plummer started his service in the archdiocese as the executive director of the Office of Catholic Education and Faith Formation on July 1, after serving the past three years as the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings in Montana.

The father of eight was born and baptized in Indianapolis.

He succeeded Annette "Mickey" Lentz, who served in the role for 12 years and is now chancellor of the archdiocese.

"Harry is committed to Catholic education," Lentz said in a news story written by John Shaughnessy. "He has a deep spirituality which gives witness to his faith. He understands the concept of total Catholic education. He has had experience both in schools and religious education. He sees his role as a shepherd of all of the ministries for which he will be responsible."

Plummer's selection was the result of a national search that began in December 2009. He inherits an archdiocese in which 25 of 71 Catholic schools have been recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education, and in which the high school graduation rate is 98 percent.

5. Archbishop Buechlein has surgery to remove a tumor.

In a page-one letter published on March 26, the archbishop wrote: "A recent medical checkup revealed that I have a small tumor that will need to be surgically removed.

See TOP STORIES, page 17

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad announce Christmas liturgies

The Christmas liturgical schedules for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad are as follows:

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Dec. 24—4:25 p.m. carols, 5 p.m. Mass, 11:15 p.m. vigil service of lessons and carols, midnight Mass with Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein scheduled as the principal celebrant.

Dec. 25—10:30 a.m. Mass. All times for liturgies in the cathedral are Eastern Standard Time.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church

Dec. 24—7 p.m. vigil, 10 p.m. Mass. Dec. 25—9:30 a.m. Mass. All times for liturgies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church are Central Standard Time.

For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †

The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which is our annual Christmas publication, is the last issue of 2010.

The Criterion will be published again on Jan. 7, 2011, and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 23 through Jan. 2 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 3, 2011. †

On the Cover

Mary holds the Child Jesus in "Virgin of the Lilies" by French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905). The Christmas

season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 9.



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Haiti earthquake, Pope Benedict named top story, newsmaker of 2010

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The devastating January earthquake in Haiti, and the recovery and rebuilding efforts that followed it topped the religious news stories of 2010, and Pope Benedict XVI was again the top newsmaker, according to the annual poll conducted by Catholic News Service.

The debate over health care reform, which bruised both the political system and the unity of the U.S. Catholic Church, was a close second among the 30 news stories on the ballot. Continuing revelations about clergy sex abuse, especially in Europe, took third place.

Among the 25 newsmakers on the ballot, Pope Benedict was the clear first-place winner. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, elected in November as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was second. Blessed John Henry Newman, beatified by Pope Benedict during a September visit to England, was third.

The poll was the 49th annual survey conducted by CNS. This year's ballots were distributed on Dec. 3, and the deadline for returns was on Dec. 9.

When the editors' poll was first conducted in 1962, the overwhelming choice for top story was the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Last year, editors chose the health care reform debate as the top religious story of the year and Pope Benedict as the top newsmaker, closely followed by U.S. President Barack Obama.

Editors were asked to vote for the top 10 news stories from a list of 30, and the top five newsmakers from a list of 25. Votes were weighted by the rankings the editors gave—10 points for a first-place vote, nine points for second, etc., and five points for top newsmaker, four for second, etc.

With 28 editors and CNS staff members submitting ballots, the maximum points that a story could have received was 280. The most a newsmaker could receive on the five-point scale was 140.

Rounding out the top five for religious news stories were the continued problems facing the global economy and the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Pope Benedict, who has been the top religious newsmaker in the CNS poll every year since 2006, took first place this year

2010 TOP NEWS

stories

1. Haiti earthquake

The Jan. 12 disaster left 230,000 people dead and 1.5 million homeless. The country struggled with recovery and an outbreak of cholera.

2. Health care reform

3. Clergy sex abuse

4. Economy, recession

5. Gulf oil spill

newsmakers

1. Pope Benedict XVI

Voted top newsmaker for the sixth year by Catholic news editors. Comments about condoms in a book released in the fall drew heavy scrutiny.

2. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

3. Blessed John Henry Newman

4. Sister Carol Keehan

5. President Barack Obama



Results from an annual CNS pool of journalists in the Catholic media.
Source: CNS

for his travels to Malta, Portugal, Cyprus, England and Scotland; his continued efforts against clergy sex abuse as new accusations surfaced in Europe and elsewhere; and the revelations in a book of interviews that he conducted with a German journalist.

Among newsmakers, Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is the president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, was fourth, and President Obama was fifth.

Here are the choices for top 10 stories and top five newsmakers of 2010, followed by points received in the weighted ballot

count and, in parentheses, the number of first-place votes received.

Stories

1. Haiti earthquake, 213 (9)
2. Health care reform, 204 (11)
3. Clergy sex abuse, especially in Europe, 142 (3)
4. Economy/recession, 116 (3)
5. Gulf oil spill, 101
6. *Roman Missal*, 82
7. Same-sex marriage and related issues, 80
8. Papal travels, 68

9. Midterm elections, 59

10. Chilean miners' rescue, 56 (2)

Newsmakers

1. Pope Benedict XVI, 114 (19)
 2. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, 90 (1)
 3. Blessed John Henry Newman, 37 (2)
 4. Sister Carol Keehan, 35 (1)
 5. President Barack Obama, 33 (1)
- Also receiving first-place votes were the rescued Chilean miners (three votes) and former Democratic Rep. Bart Stupak of Michigan (one vote). †

Vatican Christmas: It may be short on snow, but it is big in spirit and unique

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While snowfall is a rarity and Santa Claus is seldom seen, Christmas at the Vatican is truly unique.

Cranes erect an enormous evergreen alongside the granite obelisk in St. Peter's Square, and workers nested in cherry picker buckets adorn the tree with lights, ornaments and tinsel.

This year's tree is decorated with 3,000 gold and silver balls, and 1,500 white and yellow LED lights, which have lower energy consumption and greater durability. The tree is topped with a flashing star.

Construction of the larger-than-life Nativity scene takes weeks, and yards of thick burlap keep curious eyes from seeing the final product until its unveiling on Christmas Eve.

But even further from the public eye are the holiday traditions of the papal household. While Pope John Paul II had close to an open-house attitude, Pope Benedict XVI is much more discreet.

In addition to the public events, Pope Benedict celebrates Christmas privately with the members of his papal household.

"We celebrate Christmas together, listen to the holiday music, and exchange gifts," he said in the recent

book-length interview *Light of the World*.

The close-knit papal family includes Pope Benedict's two secretaries, and a small group of women from the Memores Domini lay community who care for the papal apartment. Unfortunately, this holiday season is marked with the death of one of the pope's close collaborators, Manuela Camagni, who died on Nov. 24 after she was struck by a car.

A close friend of the pope still delivers traditional Bavarian food every Christmas season.

Thaddaeus Joseph Kuehnel, a German banker in Munich, has spent the past 28 years hand delivering the pope's favorite sweets and sausages from Bavaria.

Kuehnel told Catholic News Service that he was driving to Rome the week before Christmas to deliver Bavarian sausages from the pope's favorite restaurant, Franziskaner, as well as special mustard, and sweets from the Zentis food company, which specializes in marzipan and jams.

The papal goodie bag also includes cakes and cookies that cloistered nuns baked specifically for the pope, Kuehnel said in a Dec. 8 interview.

He will load his car with five Bavarian Christmas trees for the pope, and will personally deliver the gifts and have dinner with the pope, he said.

On Christmas Day itself, no special guests are expected and the main meal, lunch, is made up of "Italian food," said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman.

The pope's brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, will arrive at the Vatican on Dec. 28 to spend a few weeks with the pope.

Father Lombardi said Dec. 28 is the date then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger always would leave Rome for Germany to spend the holidays with his brother so they have kept the same date of reunion.

All of the trees adorning the various Vatican offices and hallways, including the pope's, are decorated by the technical services department of the Vatican City governor's office, said Pier Carlo Cuscianna, the department director.

The department also provides the figurines and crèche supplies for one of the papal household's Nativity scenes, but the pope and his personal assistants "put it together as a

family," Cuscianna told CNS.

Father Lombardi said that the pope has three different Nativity scenes in the papal apartment—a large one in the hallway set up by the Vatican workmen; one under the Christmas tree in the living room, where the pope puts the baby Jesus just before celebrating Midnight Mass at St. Peter's Basilica; and one in the dining room, which has belonged to the pope for 45 years.

The large Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square is unveiled on Dec. 24, and while the pope can see it from his apartment window, he doesn't visit it until after his New Year's Eve thanksgiving prayer service.

The core figures in the scene—the Holy Family and the Magi—come from St. Vincent Pallotti, who had them on public display in a Rome parish starting in 1842.

Another Nativity scene is on display inside St. Peter's Basilica. That crèche is constructed by the basilica's workmen, known as "sanpietrini," who compete with the workers in the square in trying to build the more spectacular representation of Jesus' birth, one of the "sanpietrini" told Vatican Radio.

Carlo Stella, one of the workmen in the basilica, said they try to introduce new elements into the scene each year, and the 2010 addition is a mechanical kneeling shepherd who lifts his hat before the Christ Child.

The wooden statues were carved by a German sculptor, but the Vatican workmen fire and paint the clay chicken, ducks and sheep figurines themselves, Vatican Radio reported.

About a dozen carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and electricians work two to three weeks straight to get it ready in time for Christmas Eve when Pope Benedict will personally place the baby Jesus in the manger at the end of Mass on Dec. 24.

Almost every Vatican office has its own Nativity scene, some made from unusual materials.

The Swiss Guards, for example, use eight German beer crates for the scene's base and an empty munitions box for the grotto to symbolize that the only weapon a Christian needs is Christ. †



CNS photo/Paul Heiney

The Vatican's large Nativity scene, pictured here in St. Peter's Square last year, is kept under wraps until Christmas Eve.



Rev. Msgr. Raymond T. Bosler, Founding Editor, 1915 - 1994

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Publisher Greg A. Otolski, Associate Publisher
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Editorial



Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III, left, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, third from left, look at renovations taking place inside the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank town of Bethlehem on Oct. 25. The Palestinian government announced that it is planning an ambitious restoration project for the ancient church which marks the traditional birthplace of Jesus, an important Christian site that draws millions of visitors.

Peace be with you

“On earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14).

That seems to be the preferred translation from the original Greek of the angels’ message to the shepherds after they announced the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Other translations have been “Peace on earth; good will toward men” and “Peace on earth to men of good will.”

Regardless, we get the idea. The birth of our Savior and Lord should bring peace to those who deserve peace. St. Luke’s Gospel speaks of peace six times, usually after Jesus cures someone and says, “Go in peace.”

But Luke also says that the people proclaimed, as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest” (Lk 19:38), echoing the announcement of the angels at Jesus’ birth.

Jesus spoke often of peace. He told his disciples as they were about to journey ahead of him to towns where he expected to visit, “Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you” (Lk 10:5-6.)

And he practiced what he preached when, after his resurrection, he suddenly stood in the midst of his Apostles and said, “Peace be with you” (Lk 24:36). These quotation sources are only from Luke’s Gospel, but the other Gospels report them as well.

The point is that Jesus came on Earth to bring peace. How is it, then, that the world seems to know no peace? Jesus was born during the time of the *pax Augusta*, the peace of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus, 27 B.C. to 14 A.D., when there was peace throughout the Roman world. Since then, though, there has seldom been peace.

Even in the land where Jesus was born, peace ended when the Zealots rose up to try to defeat the Romans. That ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple in the year 70 A.D. Jerusalem has changed hands as a result of wars frequently ever since.

Today, Bethlehem, where Jesus was

born, is separated from Jerusalem by a hideous wall. It’s meant to keep Palestinian terrorists out of Jerusalem, but it also prevents Palestinian Christians from making pilgrimages to Christian shrines, from visiting relatives and, in some cases, from their own property.

Peace efforts between the Israelis and Palestinians appear to be going nowhere, with Israel continuing to expand Jewish settlements in occupied territory despite protests from the United States and the rest of the international community.

Meanwhile, the United States is still engaged in wars that seem to be accomplishing nothing positive. One of the most serious consequences of the war in Iraq is the persecution of Catholics and other Christians there by radical Muslims. They have had to flee the country by the hundreds of thousands.

The war in Afghanistan seems to be accomplishing nothing, except adding to our national debt. There appears to be agreement that there can be nothing like a military victory there. It also is acknowledged that al-Qaida in Afghanistan is no threat and the Taliban never has been a threat to the United States. Yet, we continue to fight.

The answer to the persistent question “Can’t we all just get along?” seems to be “No.” There are people out there who are determined to kill us, and do it in the name of religion. Moderate Muslims—and we are convinced that most Muslims are moderate—seem unable to control those who believe that they have a duty to kill “infidels.” Consequently, we have no choice but to defend ourselves in every way possible.

Our search for peace, though, must not mean just an absence of wars. We talk about inner peace, and this is the peace that Jesus seemed to be wishing for his disciples and those he healed.

We must continue to work for peace in the world. Jesus said during his Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9).

But let us also pray for that inner peace that the world cannot give.

—John F. Fink

Be Our Guest/Susan Wills

Thoughts on the Incarnation

I never tire of hearing Christmas carols—even if they are being piped into stores and malls just to encourage shopping excesses.

But hearing Christmas tunes recently got me thinking. The decorating frenzy of Christmas trees, lights, garlands, poinsettia plants and Santa Claus statuary often seems devoid of Christian

meaning. What exactly is being celebrated with all the music, decor and festivity of the season?

The answer, I think, is that many people are celebrating Christmas traditions and trappings rather than the stupendous event of Christ’s coming to Earth. The content is forgotten, but the glow of Christmases past remains.

The chasm between show and substance came home to me from comparing our cheery secular carols to Alfred Reed’s magnificent “Russian Christmas Music” (my gift to you, available on YouTube). In the finale of the closing movement, when the Son of God breaks through eternity into time, leaving his throne in heaven to assume our mortal flesh, and the angelic host fill the sky proclaiming the miracle of Christ’s birth, the music swells to a glorious crescendo of pealing bells, thundering percussion and brass. This is the kind of music that captures the awesome wonder of Christ’s Incarnation and birth.

Words always fall short of conveying the meaning of this unfathomable mystery. But at the beginning of his encyclical letter “The Gospel of Life,” Pope John Paul II summarized the essential points:

“By his Incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being.’ ... This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God who ‘so loved the world that he gave his only Son’ (Jn 3:16), but also the incomparable value of every human person” (#2).

Letters to the Editor Is Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve a tradition of the past?

I would like to address a growing practice in the Church today—offering the ancient practice of Midnight Mass earlier on Christmas Eve.

Though I realize that it is not against any Church teaching, I am disheartened by it and sad to see it fade into the horizon of lost traditions which have made the faith vibrant and exciting for generations.

I am not attacking priests for holding Midnight Mass early. I realize they are very busy. I just hope that they, including the Holy Father, have prayerfully considered the impact that this will have on further generations as they lose one more tradition which enables our faith to come alive in a very tangible sense.

Maybe I am unnecessarily sentimental or just simply being traditionalistic, but Midnight Mass has significant meaning. The Church realized for centuries that man’s sensual nature yearns for symbols and physical signs threaded into the fabric of our faith.

Midnight Mass is full of this symbolism, making us present in the stable on the very first hour of the day that God humbled himself to become man and bring salvation to his misguided creation.

Midnight Mass allows us to enter into that stable with the shepherds and the heavenly host as we sing carols desirous of the one sung on that first Christmas morning, and receive our Lord in flesh as he offers himself on that exalted manger, the altar.

Midnight Mass has always seemed to be the one time throughout the hustling and bustling season that the world is really at

By taking on our flesh—becoming human in all things but sin—Jesus ennobled all human life. Our dignity derives from the truth that God created us in his image, and loves us to the point of becoming man, suffering and dying to win our redemption, and thus allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

This understanding of human dignity is undermined today by a materialist and dualistic view of the human person. Many people think of the human body as something we inhabit, having no inherent value. Our bodies can be used for our pleasure. Should a body become burdensome or cause suffering, we can dispose of it.

How one understands the human person—as an insignificant bit player in the drama of one’s life or as a creature loved by God, a unity of body and soul who will live eternally—affects one’s behavior toward others. We can be dismissive of those who don’t contribute to our immediate happiness or we can see them through God’s eyes.

As C.S. Lewis explained in *The Weight of Glory*: “The dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship. ... There are no ordinary people. ... Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ ... is truly hidden.”

At Christmas gatherings, in long checkout lines and in overcrowded parking lots, let’s remember that Christ lives in the people around us.

Let’s celebrate Christmas with profound gratitude that, through his Incarnation and birth, Jesus showed us the meaning of love and the priceless value of every human life.

(Susan Wills is the assistant director for education and outreach for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.) †

peace. The cool crisp air, the snow laying as a calm blanket on the ground, and the world fast asleep as Catholics gather around the world, appropriately the first to ring in the glad tiding that the Savior has been born to us.

Jonathan Wismann
Aurora

We must pursue the truth on the wings of love, reader says

In a false illusory reality that promotes false truth or no truth at all, nothing is important and everything is acceptable as long as pleasure is held as the highest good or source of moral value.

We are creating a world where there is no recognizable truth, no benchmark, and truth is merely a subjective concept that lacks a valid universal standard.

The demarcation between real and fake has been blurred, and it is in this nebulous state of existence that we become all too familiar with the shadows and fiends of our dissent.

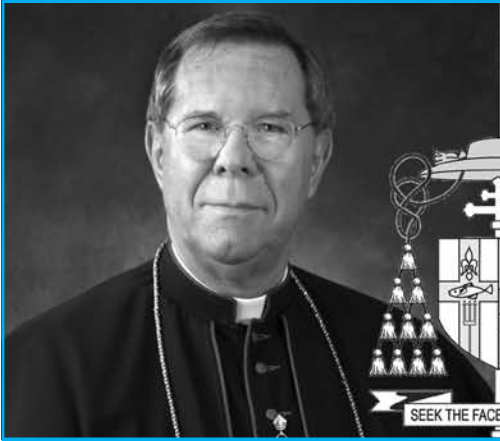
“Truth,” like the word “love,” has been much abused. We have become suspicious when one speaks of knowing the truth or claims to be in love.

Many philosophies claim that man is incapable of knowing the truth, and that love is just an array of transient emotions. Embracing such a view gives all the more distorted credence to the philosophy of hedonism, and the discarding of ethical values.

Truth has verification and love produces fruits. Both point to that than which nothing greater can be conceived. We can know the truth. We must seek the truth. We must pursue the truth on the wings of love.

Kirth N. Roach
Order of Carmelite Discalced Secular
Indianapolis

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

Live gratefully for God and each other this Christmas

Christmas Day is not just another day. One would have to be pretty hard of heart not to be touched with a little of “the Christmas spirit,” no matter what our circumstances may be.

The long and beautiful tradition of the season, enhanced by joyful music and beautiful decorations, and the custom of sharing gifts and bountiful meals all lend a romantic air to Christmas.

Yet, being hard of heart or indifferent to the feast is not out of the question for any of us. Being without faith and hope is not beyond any one of us.

Indeed, Christmas is meaningless if we are without faith and hope. If viewed as a mere secular celebration, it can even be a burden. Some of our folks find the Christmas holiday a time of depression.

And so we must pray because we are fragile and culpable.

In an audience with young people early in his pontificate, Pope John Paul II said, “We need to admit humbly that we are poor creatures, with confused ideas. ... We are fragile and in constant need of interior strength and consolation. Prayer gives us strength for great ideals, for keeping up our faith, charity, purity, generosity; prayer gives us strength to rise up from indifference and guilt, if we have had the misfortune to give in to temptation and weakness.

“Prayer gives light by which to see and to judge from God’s perspective and from

eternity. That is why you must not give up praying! Don’t let a day go by without praying a little! Prayer is a duty, but it is also a joy because it is a dialogue with God through Jesus Christ!” (Audience with Young People, March 14, 1979, *In Conversation with God*, Volume One).

In fact, Christmas time should give us pause to measure the quality of our faith.

Are we willing to see that the holiday tinsel decorates a spiritual meaning of Christmas? Can we trace all that we know as the Christmas celebration to the birth of Jesus? Can we genuflect to the Jesus, who is born like one of us? Do we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior? Do we understand that prayer is a conversation with the Son of God?

The Christmas season gives us an opportunity for a timely boost to our faith. Is it a live flame that warms the heart or perhaps is it merely a spark?

Through every liturgical season of the Church, God offers us special graces, special helps, to deepen our faith. Our challenge is to look for and to accept the gift that God offers us through the ministry of the Church. It would be unfortunate if we miss a gracious opportunity, if we ignore the inspiration that comes our way, at Christmas time.

Surely the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas time finds its roots in the fantastic gift that God gave the human

family when he gave his only Son for our salvation from sin and death.

In the spirit of God’s gift-giving, we are led to give as a sign of our love for each other. The whole evolution of the tradition of Santa Claus is rooted in a spiritual tradition of giving because of our love for each other.

And God’s gift of his only Son is our model. The spiritual call of Christmas is to live gratefully for God and for each other. The spiritual gift of Christmas is the help we need to do that. In different ways, a special Christmas gift awaits each of us.

We may find it in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. Mercy is God’s greatest gift. We surely find it in the celebration of holy Mass.

Wherever we are, on Christmas day and throughout this season of special love, however distant we may be from loved ones—I think of our loved ones who have recently gone home to God or loved ones who may serve the military in Iraq or Afghanistan—however separated we may feel from loved ones, we can truly meet them in Church, in the spirit of our prayer, especially at Mass and holy Communion.

Let’s remind ourselves that spiritual reunion is real reunion, too. I make a special point of praying in spirit with my deceased parents and relatives. I also meet my close friends in a prayer of the heart at Christmas Midnight Mass.

Know that I shall meet all of you and your loved ones in my Christmas Masses and prayer. If you like, please come and join me in the celebration of Midnight Mass at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul in Indianapolis.

May the peace and joy of Christ be with you all! And God bless our New Year 2011! †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein’s prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein’s
Prayer List
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Archbishop Buechlein’s intention for vocations for December

Catholic Grade Schools: that they may teach our children the Catholic faith and assist them in hearing and answering God’s call to service in the Church, especially as priests or religious.

Viva esta Navidad con agradecimiento a Dios y al prójimo

El Día de Navidad no es otro día cualquiera. Se tiene que tener un corazón de piedra para no sentirse conmovido por el “espíritu de la Navidad,” independientemente de las circunstancias en las que nos encontremos.

La antigua y hermosa tradición de la temporada, acentuada por la música alegre y las bellas decoraciones, la costumbre de intercambiar regalos y los banquetes dan a la Navidad un aire romántico.

A pesar de ello, para algunos de nosotros no resulta impensable mostrarse reacios o indiferentes ante esta festividad. Ninguno de nosotros está exento de quedarse sin fe y esperanza.

En efecto, la Navidad no tiene sentido si no tenemos fe y esperanza. Si la vemos como una mera celebración secular incluso puede convertirse en un fastidio. Algunas personas encuentran que la temporada de Navidad les deprime.

Y por consiguiente, debemos rezar porque somos frágiles y culpables.

A comienzos de su pontificado, el papa Juan Pablo II dijo ante un público joven: “Necesitamos admitir humildemente que somos unas pobres criaturas con ideas confusas. ... Somos frágiles y constantemente necesitamos fortaleza interior y consuelo. La oración nos brinda la fortaleza para alcanzar grandes ideales, para mantener nuestra fe, caridad, pureza y generosidad; la oración nos brinda la fortaleza para superar la indiferencia y la culpa si hemos tenido la desdicha de sucumbir a la tentación y la debilidad.

La oración nos proporciona la luz para poder ver y juzgar desde la perspectiva de Dios y desde la eternidad. ¡Es por ello que

no deben abandonar la oración! ¡No dejen que pase un día sin orar siquiera un poco! La oración es un deber, ¡pero también es un gozo ya que constituye un diálogo con Dios a través de Jesucristo!” (Audience con jóvenes, 14 de marzo de 1979, *Hablar con Dios*, Volumen 1).

De hecho, la época de Navidad debería proporcionarnos una pausa para medir la calidad de nuestra fe.

¿Acaso estamos dispuestos a ver que la guirnalda navideña decora el significado espiritual de la Navidad? ¿Podemos relacionar todo lo que sabemos acerca de la celebración de la Navidad con el nacimiento de Jesús? ¿Podemos arrodillarnos ante Jesús que nació al igual que uno de nosotros? ¿Creemos que Jesucristo es el Hijo de Dios y nuestro Salvador? ¿Acaso comprendemos que la oración es una conversación con el Hijo de Dios?

La temporada de la Navidad nos brinda la ocasión para reforzar oportunamente nuestra fe. ¿Es acaso una llama viva que calienta el corazón o quizás simplemente una chispa?

Mediante cada una de las temporadas litúrgicas de la Iglesia, Dios nos ofrece gracias especiales, auxilios especiales para profundizar en nuestra fe. Nuestro reto es buscar y aceptar el obsequio que Dios nos ofrece mediante el ministerio de la Iglesia. Sería una desventura perder una oportunidad tan espléndida, si ignoramos la inspiración que recibimos en la época de la Navidad.

Ciertamente la tradición de intercambiar regalos en Navidad se remonta al fantástico obsequio que Dios dio a la familia humana cuando entregó a su único Hijo para

salvarnos del pecado y de la muerte.

Siguiendo el espíritu dadivoso de Dios, obsequiamos como señal de nuestro amor mutuo. La evolución de la tradición de Papá Noel encuentra sus raíces en la tradición espiritual de obsequiar en virtud del amor que nos tenemos unos a otros.

Y el obsequio de Dios al entregar a su único Hijo nos sirve como ejemplo. El llamado espiritual de la Navidad es para vivir con agradecimiento a Dios y al prójimo. El don espiritual de la Navidad es la ayuda que necesitamos para lograrlo. A cada uno de nosotros le espera un obsequio especial de Navidad, en formas distintas.

Quizás lo encontremos en el sacramento de la penitencia y la reconciliación. La misericordia es el don más excelso de Dios. Con seguridad lo encontramos en la celebración de la Santa Misa.

Dondequiera que nos encontremos en el Día de Navidad y a lo largo de toda esta temporada de amor especial, sin importar qué tan lejos estemos de nuestros seres queridos (pienso en nuestros seres queridos que se han ido a la casa de Dios o nuestros seres queridos que sirven en el ejército en Iraq o Afganistán), no importa cuán distantes nos sintamos de nuestros seres queridos, verdaderamente podemos reencontrarlos en la Iglesia, en el espíritu de nuestra oración, especialmente en la Misa y en la sagrada Comunión.

Recordemos que la reunión espiritual también es una reunión real. Me hago el propósito especial de rezar espiritualmente con mis padres y familiares difuntos. También me reúno con mis amigos más cercanos en una oración de corazón en la Misa de Gallo.

Sé que me reuniré con todos ustedes y sus seres queridos en mis misas de Navidad y en la oración. Si lo desean, acompañenme a celebrar la Misa de Gallo en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo en Indianapolis.

¡Que la paz y el gozo de Cristo los acompañe! ¡Y que Dios bendiga nuestro Nuevo Año 2011! †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo
Buechlein
Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa,
Language Training Center, Indianapolis.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

Escuelas primarias católicas: que ellos puedan enseñar la fe católica a nuestros niños y puedan ayudarles a oír y contestar la llamada de Dios para servir en la Iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes o religiosos.

Events Calendar

December 17

Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Mass, breakfast and program, Richard Mourdock, state treasurer, presenter, 6:30-8:30 a.m., online reservations only. Reservations and information: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

Holy Spirit Church, 10350 Glaser Way, Fishers, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). **Charismatic praise and worship**, 7 p.m., Mass, 7:30 p.m., praise and worship. Information: 317-849-9245.

December 18

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants, pro-life Mass**, Father Todd Goodson, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for

Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

December 19

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Second annual "Lessons and Carols,"** 6:30 p.m., free-will donations accepted. Information: 317-926-7359.

Richmond Catholic Community, 701 N. "A" St., Richmond. **Charismatic prayer group**, 7 p.m. Information: dicksoncorp@parallax.ws.

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Mass, noon, on third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in**, groups of 10 pray the Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

December 21

St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **"Advent and Christmas Concert,"** musicians Tony Avellana and Linda Yu-Picard and vocalist Katie Stark, presenters, 7-9 p.m., free-will offering benefits "Seeds of Hope," a transitional housing facility at St. Joseph Parish that assists women recovering from addictions.

December 26

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Mass, noon, on third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in**, groups of 10 pray the Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

December 29

Paoli Peaks, Paoli. **New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries, ski trip**, youth, young adults and

families, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., \$25 per person includes ski rental and lift pass, ski lesson and lunch, registration deadline at noon on Dec. 22. Information: 812-945-2000.

December 31

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **New Year's Eve prayer service and Mass**, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 9-11 p.m., Mass 11:45 p.m. Information: 812-825-4642, ext. 200, or marianoasis@bluemarble.net.

January 1

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God, Mass**, 10 a.m. Information: 812-825-4642, ext. 200, or marianoasis@bluemarble.net.

January 2

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington.

Epiphany Sunday, Mass, 9 a.m., potluck dinner following Mass. Information: 812-825-4642, ext. 200, or marianoasis@bluemarble.net.

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Mass, noon, on third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in**, groups of 10 pray the Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

January 5

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, staff lounge, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced, new members welcome, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-370-1189.

January 6

Archbishop Edward T.

O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Abba, Father Chapter, Catholics United for the Faith, "Islam and Christianity,"** part one, 6-9 p.m. Information: 317-236-1569.

January 8

St. Roch Parish, Family Life Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Single Seniors**, meeting, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

January 13

Marian University, Hackelmeier Memorial Library, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Sen. Richard G. Lugar Franciscan Center for Global Studies, speaker series, **"Haiti: One Year After the Earthquake,"** William Canny, presenter, 7 p.m., free admission. Registration required. Reservations: <http://www.marian.edu/LFCGS/Pages/SpeakerSeries/Registration.aspx>. †

Retreats and Programs

December 31-January 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"New Year's Eve Retreat."** Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

January 7-9

Sisters of St. Benedict, Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **"Come and See" retreat**, women between the ages of 18 to 40. Information: 800-734-9999 or vocation@thedome.org.

January 10

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Come Away and Rest Awhile," silent reflection day**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$25 per person includes light breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

January 14-16

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Tobit Weekend," marriage preparation retreat.** Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

January 15

Sisters of St. Benedict, Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **"Saturday Morning at the Dome-Grieving Our Losses,"** Benedictine Sister Kathryn Huber, presenter, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m. following light lunch, \$45 per person. Information: 812-367-1411.

January 26

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"An Evening of Reflection,"** Father Michael McKinney, presenter. Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

January 27

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Day of Reflection,"** Father Michael McKinney, presenter. Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

January 30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Pre-Cana Conference," marriage preparation program.** 2-6 p.m. Information: 317-236-1586 or 800-236-1582, ext. 1586. †

St. Vincent de Paul Society council to benefit from vehicle donations

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is launching a nationwide vehicle donation program.

Proceeds from these donations will benefit local councils of the society, including the council based in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The Indianapolis council, which is operated entirely by volunteers, manages a food pantry, a distribution center for household goods and

clothing, programs for homeless people and shut-ins, a free legal clinic, and free medical services through collaboration with the Gennesaret Free Clinic.

For more information about the vehicle donation program, call 800-322-8284 or log on to www.svdpusacars.com. For more information about the Indianapolis council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, log on to www.sdvpinindy.org. †

Ring in the New Year while on retreat

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis is hosting its annual New Year's Eve retreat, titled "Growing the Holy," on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

Father James Farrell, Fatima's director, and Father John McCaslin, the pastor of Holy Trinity and St. Anthony parishes, both in Indianapolis, are the retreat directors.

The cost of the retreat is \$135 per person or \$250 per married couple. The overnight retreat begins with arrival at

4 p.m. on New Year's Eve and concludes after brunch on New Year's Day.

The registration fee includes overnight accommodations, a holiday dinner, a toast and appetizers to enjoy while welcoming the New Year as well as a continental breakfast and New Year's Day brunch.

Registration for this annual retreat has filled up quickly in the past. Those couples interested in participating in the retreat should call Fatima at 317-545-7681 before Dec. 22. †



Photo courtesy of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

Caroling on horseback

Five members of the senior class of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College ride horses wearing holiday attire on Dec. 7 on the school's campus in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. The students sang Christmas carols during their annual December ride. Since 1989, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College has maintained a stable of horses as part of its department of equine studies.

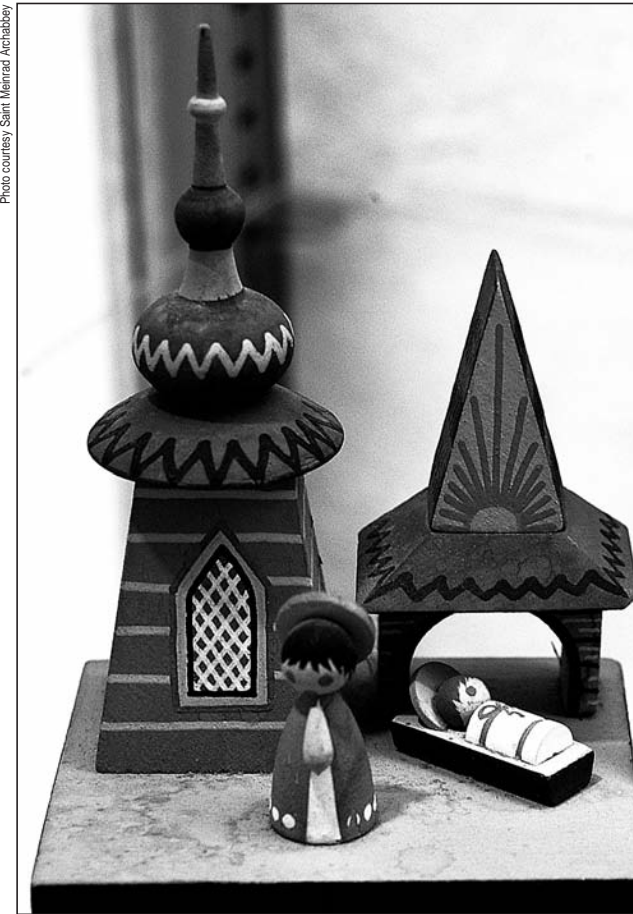


Photo courtesy Saint Meinrad Archabbey

Crèche display

This crèche is one of several Nativity scenes on display through Jan. 10 at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library in St. Meinrad. The crèches come from the monastery's collections and the Catherine A. Smith Nativity Collection, which was donated to Saint Meinrad Archabbey in 2002. Smith began collecting crèche scenes in 1971 during her extensive travels around the world. The exhibit is free and open to the public. For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or 800-987-7311 or visit the Archabbey Library's website at www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/library_hours.aspx.

Isaiah's prophecy proclaims the hope of salvation

By Fr. Dale Launderville, O.S.B.

In a time of war and economic difficulties, a country looks for a way forward.

In Isaiah 7, from which the first reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent is taken, the prophet Isaiah comes to King Ahaz in Jerusalem around 733 B.C. and exhorts him to have confidence.

The neighboring kings from Samaria and Syria are putting extreme pressure on Ahaz to enter into an alliance with them to resist the more powerful king of Assyria from the east.

Ahaz does not want to be part of this alliance.

Isaiah counsels him to have faith that the Lord will take care of him. Therefore, he should do nothing.

But Ahaz is worried about these two less powerful neighboring kings so much so that his heart and that of his people have been shaking "as the trees of the forest tremble in the wind" (Is 7:2).

It seems that even before Isaiah counsels him to avoid taking any action, Ahaz has already made up his mind to undercut the

neighboring kings from Samaria and Syria by making an alliance with the more powerful king of Assyria.

In the short run, this alliance with Assyria will give Ahaz more leverage in his rule in Jerusalem.

But in the long run, it will mean selling out his people and his region to an Assyrian king intent on swallowing up all the smaller countries within his reach.

Isaiah tries to keep Ahaz from taking this shortsighted, self-destructive action of entering into an alliance with the king of Assyria. He counsels him that the pressure from the two lesser kings of Samaria and Syria will dissipate within a short time.

And so Isaiah gives him a sign: "The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Is 7:14). Isaiah continues, predicting that, before this child is 20 years old, "the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted" (Is 7:16).

This challenge to do nothing and calm one's fears by trusting that all will work out proves to be too much for King Ahaz. He makes the alliance with the king of Assyria. This action leads to the deportation of the 10 Israelite tribes in Samaria.

Ahaz's betrayal of the covenant bond for the sake of his own power and security in the short run would reshape the subsequent history of Israel and Judah.

Isaiah's message was clear, but it was one that required trust.

When Isaiah gave Ahaz the sign of the virgin with child, most likely Ahaz would have understood this young woman to be his wife. She soon gave birth to her son, Hezekiah.

The meaning of Isaiah's divinely inspired message, however, was not exhausted by the birth of Hezekiah.

Surely, Hezekiah was born, and the kings of Samaria and Syria at that time were banished. But the identity of the virgin and her son would be the subject of hope and speculation in subsequent centuries among the Israelite/Jewish peoples who treasured the prophecy of Isaiah.

The heart of this message is contained in the name Immanuel, which means "God is with us."

If we truly believe that God is with us, then we will be able to let go of our efforts to save ourselves and allow God to be our ultimate concern.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that by this sign God would work through the dynasty of David in Jerusalem to bring well-being to the people. This form of royal government had been in place for more than 200 years by the time Hezekiah began to rule Judah (725 B.C.).

Hezekiah rose high in Isaiah's estimation as a Davidic king, who was aware that his power came from the Lord.

The piety of King Hezekiah shines through his weakness when he prays to the Lord to heal his illness (Is 38:2-3). This prayer for his own healing fits together with his prayer for the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian aggressor, who has returned to take over Jerusalem and Judah (Is 37:15-20).

Hezekiah's attitude of trust in the Lord stands in strong contrast with Ahaz's stubborn refusal to believe. So Isaiah presents in his prophecy a profile of a king who can bring blessings to his land because he trusts in the Lord.

While Hezekiah was good, he was not perfect. So Isaiah speaks of an ideal king in the future who will be so filled with the Spirit of the Lord that he will bring perfect justice and harmony to the Earth (Is 11:1-5).

Isaiah's prophecy about a virgin giving birth to a child was ultimately realized in the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary in first-century Palestine. Jesus is the royal figure who unites heaven and Earth, and brings us the salvation for which we long.

The fullness of these blessings lies in the future. Jesus has died and risen, and will come again.

So when we find ourselves in times of stress and anxiety, we can readily identify with the situation of King Ahaz. Yet the challenge is clear. The future lies in trusting that God is with us.

(Benedictine Father Dale Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.) †

'Isaiah's prophecy about a virgin giving birth to a child was ultimately realized in the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary in first-century Palestine.'



This stained-glass window depicting the prophet Isaiah highlights his prophecy about a virgin giving birth to a child that has been realized in the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary.

Discussion Point



Good news, joy found in Scriptures about Christmas

This Week's Question

What is your favorite verse from Scripture concerning Christmas?

"'Peace on Earth to men of good will' [Lk 2:14]. A person of good will is someone who is searching to do God's will. It is in doing or at least in [seeking] to do God's will that one experiences peace." (Joe Campbell, Superior Township, Mich.)

"Luke 2:9-11 tells of the angel appearing to the shepherds with the 'good news of great joy.' For the shepherds, the brightness of God's glory appearing in the dark of night was cause for enormous fear. With the words of the angel, 'Do not be afraid,' the arrival

of the Messiah became known: Here at last ... the Good News had arrived!" (Ruth Lewis, Akron, Ohio)

"1 Corinthians 13:4 says that 'love is patient; love is kind.' The Christmas season is such a hassle, but these verses remind us that Christ is love and, if we want to be like him, we must be patient." (Elaine Mozdy, Erie, Pa.)

"My favorites ... for Christmas or any time are the prologue to the Gospel of John 1:1-18, especially verse 14: 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.' Any time I need a lift, I just read those words." (Susan K. Rowland, Phoenix, Ariz.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Wisdom of the saints: St. Peter Canisius

St. Peter Canisius, whose feast is on Dec. 21, is the first of two Jesuits to be



proclaimed as Doctors of the Church—the second being St. Robert Bellarmine.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, sent Peter Canisius to Germany in 1549. His work there led Pope Leo XIII to call Peter the Second Apostle of Germany—St. Boniface being the first.

Peter lived from 1521 to 1597. He taught Catholic doctrine at Ingolstadt, Vienna, Prague, Augsburg, Innsbruck and Munich. He established Jesuit colleges in Munich, Innsbruck, Augsburg, Vienna, Würzburg and Dillingen. His influence was felt throughout what was then the Holy Roman Empire, which included most of the German-speaking lands of Europe.

He is famous for his catechisms—one for college students, a second for children and a third for adolescents. His first catechism became the chief catechetical writing of the

Catholic Reformation, printed in some 400 editions over the next 200 years.

He also wrote prayer books, lives of saints, other devotional books and two personal books: *Confessions* and *Testament*. They reveal his inner life and the religious motives that inspired all his activities.

For his feast, the Church assigns an excerpt from his *Testament* to the *Office of Readings*. It refers to a profound spiritual experience, a vision that he had at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in 1549. It happened during his meditation after he received a blessing from Pope Paul III before he set out for Germany.

Written in the form of a prayer to "Eternal High Priest," Peter wrote about the great consolation and presence of God's grace that he experienced. These were offered, he said, by Christ's Apostles, "to whom men go on pilgrimage to the Vatican and who there work wonders under your guidance"—apparently referring to Sts. Peter and Paul.

Peter Canisius wrote that these Apostles, "these great intercessors," gave him their blessings and confirmed his mission to Germany, seeming to promise

their good will to him as an apostle to that country. He received the message that day, directly from Christ, that Germany was committed to his care and, "I was to continue to be solicitous for it thereafter. I was to desire to live and die for it."

Then, he wrote, it was as if Christ opened to him his Sacred Heart: "I seemed to see it directly before my eyes." He said that Christ told him "to drink from this fountain," inviting him to "draw the waters of my salvation from your wellspring, my Savior."

Peter wrote that he was most eager that streams of faith, hope and love would flow into him from Christ's Sacred Heart, and he was thirsting for poverty, chastity and obedience.

He then said that he received a promise from Christ of a garment made of three parts. They were to "cover my soul in its nakedness, and to belong especially to my religious profession. The three parts were peace, love and perseverance."

Protected by this garment of salvation, he said, "I was confident that I would lack nothing, but all would succeed and give you glory." †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Grace: The best Christmas present we could ever receive

There's something that we can learn about our life of faith by comparing the



way in which many animals come to maturity after they are born with the way this happens among humans.

In the case of many animals and most insects, their parents don't care for them at all after they come into

this world. They may be quite vulnerable to the attack of predators, but their innate instincts are often quite strong and help them to survive and mature.

Even animals who receive their parents' care for a period of time usually don't enjoy it for very long. It might be for a few days, months or a year or two.

No newborn seems to need as much care for as long a time as a human baby, who doesn't come to true maturity for more than a decade.

In that light, it is amazing to realize just how defenseless our almighty Lord chose to become when he took on our human flesh in the womb of our Blessed Mother and was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

He, through whom the entire universe

was created, was dependent in every way upon his parents.

Given the difficult circumstances into which he was born and would live as a young child—having to be hustled away to safety in Egypt as an infant—I am glad that our heavenly Father chose the saintly Mary and Joseph to care for him.

Looking back on the challenges during my nearly nine years as a father, I know that I would have been a poor substitute for Joseph.

Our heavenly Father gave Mary and Joseph a special grace to help them carry out their mission of caring for the infant Savior placed in their care.

That grace is the same in kind, if not in degree, that each of us received at our baptism, and has been renewed in us in our subsequent celebration of the sacraments, the Eucharist and reconciliation, in particular.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly teaches that grace is nothing less than a "participation in the life of God" (#1997). It truly makes us adopted children of our heavenly Father.

He is a Father who far outshines even St. Joseph. For centuries, he cared for every need of the people of Israel, his chosen people, even though, like us, they were

constantly unfaithful to him.

In the years that I have been a father, my sons have been quite needy in a manner befitting their age.

But I would be lying if I told you that I was patient all of the time with their constant requests. And since I work out of the home four days a week at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis, they don't try my patience nearly as much as they do my wife, Cindy.

Knowing how challenging it is for me to become the father that God has called me to be helps me be all the more aware of just how loving and patient that he is.

And that awareness makes it all the more amazing that he has empowered me with his grace—his very life—to become more and more like him in my life with my four young sons.

In the stable in Bethlehem, Jesus wasn't the only one who revealed God to the shepherds and the wise men. Mary and Joseph did that, too, in their grace-inspired loving and patient care for their child.

We parents can do the same in our daily lives with our families. Our heavenly Father has given us the grace—the best Christmas present we could ever receive—to make it happen. †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Searching for the longest married couple in the U.S.

While 2010 ends by celebrating the birth of Jesus, a well-known



organization—Worldwide Marriage Encounter—is in the process of locating the couple who has been married for the most years in our nation.

I suggest that all Catholics check the number of years their elders have been

married and, if the years are formidable, enter those couples in this nationwide event.

Serving as the North American pillar for the Worldwide Marriage Encounter movement are a Florida couple, Dick and Diane Baumbach, and a priest, Father Dick Morse.

As overseers of the project, they note, "What has been amazing is how many younger couples are nominating their parents for the honor. We've also had folks nominate themselves as well as friends of couples married many, many years."

Already, half of the states are represented, but any number of couples can be nominated from each state.

The Baumbachs and Father Morse say that the project honors the commitment of married couples, and gives hope for the longevity of marriage to younger couples.

Nominations, which are open to all husbands and wives regardless of their faith tradition, can be submitted by e-mail, regular mail or phone.

Contact information for nominations requires the couples' names, the date of their wedding, where they currently reside, and a phone number or e-mail address to reach them.

People who want to enter a couple can choose one of the following options:

- E-mail the information to dickanddiane66@bellsouth.net.
- Mail the information to Dick and Diane Baumbach, 1430 Scorpious Court, Merritt Island, FL 32953.
- Call them at 321-453-2475 and provide the couple's information.

Nominations must be received by Jan. 10, 2011.

Scott and Karen Seaborn and Divine Word Father Thomas Griffith, the U.S. ecclesial team for Worldwide Marriage Encounter, will present gifts to the couple married the most years during an event on Feb. 14, 2011. Individual state

winners will receive special certificates of achievement.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter has offered weekend retreat experiences for more than 42 years, and is considered the original faith-based marriage enrichment program. Such programs are continually updated to keep abreast of changes in society.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter now offers evening and half-day programs presented at parishes and other church facilities. WWME programs are available in 90 countries. In the U.S., programs are offered in English, Spanish, French and Korean.

My husband, Paul, and I, as well as many of our Catholic friends, were very involved in Marriage Encounter during the early years after our weddings.

Paul and I are grateful to have had those Marriage Encounter experiences.

We have been married for 52 years, and pray that our marriage will remain strong—and continue to grow stronger—in the coming years.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Catholic Education Outreach/

Amy McClain

New plan helps better educate students

The way that Americans educate their children is under the microscope. The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, although academically successful, are not exempt from this scrutiny. What can we do better?



Research says that the single most influential factor in a child's education is the classroom teacher.

Armed with this

knowledge, the Office of Catholic Education assembled a group of teachers, principals and administrators to create the Archdiocesan Compensation Task Force (ACT).

With extensive research, discussion and collaboration, ACT has developed a plan that helps ensure that our students receive the best possible secular and religious education under our care.

As the group polled administrators and teachers in the field, the realization became clear. We are revolutionizing education. We can change the way that principals and teachers communicate. We have the potential to change classroom instruction and enhance school climate. Developing our teachers and holding them more accountable will improve our students' academic proficiency and growth.

Imagine a classroom where the teacher can closely monitor each student's progress and, as a result, vary instruction. This means that each student has the opportunity to grow at his or her own rate because the teacher is meeting the need where it exists. Doesn't that sound impressive?

It is already happening within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis based on what we learned at many schools during Project EXCEED, a school improvement initiative from 2002-06 funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and other generous donors. And the data points to the teacher!

ACT was asked to create a program that can help all teachers in the archdiocese to more equitably reap what they sow. The plan is designed as an evaluation process through which teachers will be coached, trained and appraised, including their articulation of our Catholic mission and identity.

Principals and archdiocesan coaches will provide training to help teachers implement best practices or proven approaches known to be successful in the classroom.

The process is personal. Teachers may have to put aside some long-held beliefs about learning that do not produce results. Teachers will be asked to use more data-driven strategies in their lesson plans.

Principals and teachers will learn to analyze student performance data at a higher level in both secular and religious subjects in order to direct instruction and assist students with their faith development.

The process is as scientific as education has ever been. It holds much promise for the overall mission of our Catholic schools—our Church, our teachers, our parents and our students.

As education takes a more scientific spin, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will follow suit by putting this initiative into action to improve the good yields that we already reap. Our students will benefit from a more individualized education.

But how will teachers benefit? In the business world, the person who does the best job often gets a bonus or a raise. Shouldn't our teachers?

The answer is "yes." Compensation for a job well done is integral to the success of the program so these questions are already being addressed by the task force.

As we begin to change the way that we educate our children, we ask for your help. Pray with us—the Archdiocesan Compensation Task Force, the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education and your Catholic school staff members—for a safe and fruitful journey.

We ask God to bless us with strength of heart and clarity of mission as we continue to strive for excellence in Catholic education and faith formation.

(Amy McClain is the principal of St. Patrick School in Terre Haute and a member of ACT.) †

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 19, 2010

- Isaiah 7:10-14
- Romans 1:1-7
- Matthew 1:18-24

This weekend, the Church celebrates the fourth and last Sunday of Advent.



For its first reading, this weekend's liturgy offers a passage from the first section of the Book of Isaiah.

This reading refers to King Ahaz of the southern Hebrew kingdom of Judah. The reference allows scholars to date this

prophecy since it is known that Ahaz reigned in the last third of the eighth century before Christ.

Ahaz is not regarded as having been an especially great king. He hardly met Isaiah's expectations, hence the prophet chided him.

Ultimately, Isaiah's criterion for Ahaz, or for any king, was that the king first and foremost was a servant of God and that drawing the people to God was the king's ambition.

Since David, especially, kings had been seen as God's assigned and anointed agents. This religious role overtook all other considerations. The final judgment of how well the kings performed was whether or not they were truly loyal to God.

Urged to be loyal and devoted by Isaiah, Ahaz was promised a sign of God's favor. The sign was the birth of a son, whose mother was Ahaz's young bride or a virgin who actually was his concubine.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans provides the second reading.

Introducing himself, Paul firmly states that he is an Apostle, called by the Lord to proclaim the Gospel.

Above and beyond everything, Paul saw himself as God's servant, obediently following Jesus, the Lord and Savior.

For its last reading, the Church presents a section from the Gospel of St. Matthew that recalls the conception of Jesus.

Only two of the four Gospels—Matthew and Luke—recount the birth of Jesus.

This weekend's reading is very clear as recorded in Luke. Jesus had no earthly

father, but Jesus truly was human. He was the son of Mary, a human being, and since she alone was the earthly parent, Jesus received human nature itself from her.

In this Scripture passage, Joseph is concerned, to say the least. He first understandably assumes that Mary, his betrothed, has been unfaithful to him. How else could Mary have become pregnant?

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream to relieve his mind by revealing to him that the unborn child is, in fact, the Son of God.

It is more than simply a chronicle of the conception and birth of Jesus, divine though these events may have been.

The coming of the Messiah is a sign, perfect and penultimate, of God's everlasting love for humankind. God never fails, and is never absent from people.

Finally, the reading explains that Jesus, the Son of God, also is man.

Reflection

The season of Advent is the careful and focused period preceding Christmas. It is a time for preparation, but it is more than a time to prepare for a festive day.

More fully, Advent calls us joyfully, and with thanksgiving, to remember the Lord's birth, as a human, the child of Mary, in Bethlehem.

However, the Church also provides Advent to assist us in our personal effort to unite with the Lord.

Our union with God, which is so intimate that we can possess even God's eternal life, occurred because of our unity, first with Jesus in a common humanity. This union, established by creation, was completed in the Lord's own humanity.

We ratify and reinforce our union with God by individually choosing holiness.

Turning us toward prayer and strengthening our spiritual resolve by the uprooting of sin from our lives, the Church not only invites us to observe Advent, but also accommodates our spiritual progress. The question is if we shall respond.

As we ponder this question, the Church reassures us. Be strong, it advises. God will strengthen and enlighten us. He has never failed us in his love, mercy and guidance, given to us in and through Jesus. †

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 20

Isaiah 7:10-14

Psalm 24:1-6

Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, Dec. 21

Peter Canisius, priest and doctor

Song of Songs 2:8-14

or Zephaniah 3:14-18a

Psalm 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21

Luke 1:39-45

Wednesday, Dec. 22

1 Samuel 1:24-28

(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8

Luke 1:46-56

Thursday, Dec. 23

John of Kanty, priest

Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24

Psalm 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14

Luke 1:57-66

Friday, Dec. 24

Morning

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29

Luke 1:67-79

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29

Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

Matthew 1:1-25

or Matthew 1:18-25

Saturday, Dec. 25

The Nativity of the Lord

Midnight

Isaiah 9:1-6

Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14

Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12

Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:15-20

Day

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98:1-6

Hebrews 1:1-6

John 1:1-18

or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Sunday, Dec. 26

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14

Psalm 128:1-5

Colossians 3:12-21

or Colossians 3:12-17

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Monday, Dec. 27

John, Apostle and Evangelist

1 John 1:1-4

See READINGS, page 16

Go Ask Your Father/Fr. Francis Hoffman

Catholic churches in Rome, Jordan and Syria are oldest surviving buildings

Q Do we know when the first church building was constructed and where it was located?



If not, what is the oldest known church building that has survived—if not intact, then at least in ruins?

A You ask a question about Christian archaeology, a very important topic because

of the Catholic Church's claim of apostolic origin.

We can trace the Catholic Church back to the time of Christ by means of the unbroken succession of the Roman pontiffs.

In fact, we know exactly where St. Peter was buried.

There are various archaeological claims for the oldest Catholic church in the world, and each has its own merits, whether in the Holy Land at Rihab in the Jordan or St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in Rome.

The Church of St. Simeon Stylites in Syria dates back to the fifth century and is well preserved.

Parts of the ancient burial monument of St. Peter are embedded in the foundations of that great Roman basilica and date from around A.D. 67.

Also, parts of the original Constantinian Basilica of St. Peter (c. 320) can be found in the current version of St. Peter's Basilica.

My pick for the oldest known Catholic church building that has survived and is currently in use is the "Pantheon" in Rome, which was built by the emperor Hadrian in A.D. 126. It was appropriated by the Catholic Church during the seventh century, and dedicated to "St. Mary and the Martyrs."

It is in perfect condition, and is a marvel to behold.

Q In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it states in a section that talks about offenses against the dignity of marriage, "If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not

constitute a moral offense" (#2383).

Please explain this statement specifically in reference to legal rights and protection of inheritance.

A The section you cite appears in the Catechism's presentation of the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

When a couple gets married in the Church, there are civil legal effects and canonical—Church—effects to the marriage.

The "ensurance of legal rights, the care of the children or the protection of inheritance" is a broad category, and a specific listing of all situations where a civil divorce would be justified is not practical here.

As an example, a common case where civil divorce would be justified because it would ensure legal rights, care of the children and protection of inheritance is a spouse who has become an addict, whether to drugs, gambling or alcohol. Sadly, in this situation, the chaos caused by the addict could ruin the entire family. That is not fair.

In this scenario, it is possible for the wife—or the husband, as the case may be—to seek a divorce in a civil court to protect herself and her children.

In pursuit of his pleasure, an addict could leave the family destitute so a civil divorce would allow her—in most states—to protect half of the family's assets from further erosion.

In this case, while the couple has been granted a civil divorce with attendant consequences for the family assets, it does not mean that they are no longer married in the eyes of the Church or in the eyes of God.

If they have a reasonable doubt that their marriage was valid in the first place, they have a right to petition the competent ecclesiastical authority—their bishop—to review their marriage and determine if it is null.

If, in fact, there was a serious defect at the time of the marriage, the bishop's tribunal will declare the marriage null. That is the Church's process of granting an annulment. †

My Journey to God

Advent Longing

O come, Emmanuel,
envelop me in silence,
enfold me in mystery,
wrap me in the midnight mantle
of stillness and solitude.

Teach my soul to wait with eager
anticipation
for the day when the lion lies with the
lamb,
when swords become plowshares,
when brokenness calls forth wholeness,
when oppression gives way to justice.

Massage my world-wearied heart
that it may beat strongly as it seeks
Your light,
Your truth,
Your Word.

Come, Emmanuel,
illumine the darkness!



Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

By Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom,
O.S.B.

(Benedictine Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom is a member of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. This hand-painted image of Mary holding the newborn Jesus was created by a Ugandan artist on bark-cloth from a tree. To make the tree bark as thin as cloth, artists must pound on it for a long time. This picture of the Mother and Child is displayed at the archdiocesan Mission Office at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.)

Iraqi Embassy to the Vatican commemorates attack on Baghdad church

ROME (CNS)—Two Iraqi women wore, pinned to their lapels, pictures of the loved ones they lost in a terrorist attack on a church in Baghdad. One woman had photos of her husband and young son, and the other woman had a creased black and white portrait of her mother. The pictures were stuck securely over their hearts.

Others wore rosaries around their necks or holy medals fastened to their shirts as a way to remember and pay witness to their Christian faith.

Forty-seven Iraqi Christian survivors of the attack on Oct. 31 on the Syrian Catholic church in Baghdad were among the many guests invited to a special commemoration of the 58 people who died during the terrorist siege of the church and the military raid that brought the blockade to an end.

The commemoration on Dec. 9 was held at the Iraqi Embassy to the Vatican, and was organized with the Iraqi Embassy to Italy.

One woman, who asked not to be named, said she lost her father, her brother, his wife and their four-month-old baby who was bludgeoned to death by the terrorist attackers. Her three sisters were spared because they stayed home that Sunday morning, she said.

The petite 24-year-old woman said with a shy smile that her loved ones “had the best death you could have—inside a church while praying. It’s a testament of faith.”

She was one of 26 injured Iraqis—including three children—who came to Rome to receive treatment at the Gemelli Hospital. The Italian foreign ministry arranged for the injured Iraqis and 21 accompanying family members to fly to Rome.

By Dec. 9, most of them were no longer hospitalized, but they were awaiting news from the Italian government about their fate.

“They’re looking for refugee status and waiting for a response,” said Father Hani al-Jameel.

Many would like to stay in Italy, but their temporary visas were to expire on Dec. 15, “and they don’t know what will happen. They are not tranquil about it,” he told Catholic News Service.

The Iraqi priest from Nineveh is studying in Rome and lives near the hospital at a large religious center. He said he borrowed two vans a few days earlier, and picked up the Iraqi families to take them to the center and its outdoor grounds for a walk and snack near a statue of Mary.

He celebrated a Syrian Mass for them and, later that evening, they had dinner together and played “*tombola*,” an Italian variation of bingo.

“We even had prizes” for the winners, he said.

“It was like a party. For a few moments, people could forget a bit,” he said.

CNS photo/Thaler al-Sudani, Reuters



Iraqis attend a memorial Mass at the Syrian Catholic church in Baghdad on Dec. 10. The liturgy recalled the 58 people, mostly worshippers, who died in the Oct. 31 terrorist siege of the church and the military raid that followed. On Dec. 9, the Iraqi Embassy to the Vatican held a special commemoration remembering the people who died during the terrorist siege of the church.

Father al-Jameel said it has been difficult to figure out what is best for the Iraqi families, many of them women. Most want to stay in Italy, but it would represent “a huge loss” for Iraq and the families they leave behind, he said.

“My advice is for them to go back, but I feel their fear. Maybe if they can stay awhile, and when they feel more certain maybe then they will return,” he said.

The call to not give in to fear and to stay in Iraq was echoed in the speeches at the embassy event, which was attended by Vatican diplomats and officials, including Cardinal Marc Ouellet, the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and Msgr. Khaled Akasheh, the head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue’s section for relations with Muslims.

Archbishop Jules Mikhael al-Jamil, the Syrian Catholic Church’s representative to the Vatican, said, “We are Iraqis. We will not emigrate.”

Archbishop al-Jamil criticized the “infidels who have nothing to do with religion,” who are trying to eliminate Christians from the Middle East by terrorizing them with threats, kidnappings and killings.

He called on Muslims to come out more forcefully

CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Catholic Press Photos



Pope Benedict XVI greets a young man at the Vatican on Dec. 1 who was injured when the Syrian Catholic cathedral in Baghdad, Iraq, was attacked on Oct. 31.

against terrorist elements, and called on Western nations to help improve security in Iraq to favor the creation of “a new Orient that would be like a mosaic of different religions.” †

Vatican launches project to restore and digitize millions in photo archives



This is a scan of a badly deteriorated negative of Pope John Paul II meeting his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, in a Rome prison on Dec. 27, 1983. The Vatican is embarking on a project to restore and digitize its archive of more than 8 million photographic images.

CNS photo/Paul Haring

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican is embarking on a project to restore and digitize its archive of more than 8 million photographic images.

The images, which date to the 1930s, comprise a unique visual history of seven pontificates. But many of the negatives have been damaged by handling and poor storage, officials said.

The restoration project, unveiled at a news conference on Dec. 7, will take at least five years. The negatives—including early glass-plate negatives—will be cleaned and scanned for digital preservation, and a new storage facility will control temperature and humidity levels to prevent future damage.

The archive had its beginnings in the 1930s when Rome photographer Francesco Giordani set up a photo studio near the Vatican and was called to do

various portraits of Pope Pius XI. He was called more and more often when the Vatican newspaper began publishing photos in its pages, and by the 1960s his archive was already immense.

When Giordani retired in 1977, the photo archive was left with the Vatican, which didn’t really know what to do with the collection. After being temporarily housed at the Vatican Museums and elsewhere, it was entrusted to the offices of *L’Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper.

Officials said much of the damage to the negatives was the result of handling—not surprising, since many of the images were enlarged and printed for journalists or for pilgrims and other guests who wanted mementos of papal audiences and events.

Since 2006, the Vatican photographers have worked almost exclusively with digital cameras. †

Pope to make four foreign trips, including visit to Spain for World Youth Day, in 2011

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI plans to make four foreign trips in 2011, including one to his German homeland and a three-day visit to the African country of Benin.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, told reporters on Dec. 14 that the pope would also make four trips to Italian cities. In all, the pope will spend 18 days on the road next year.

The pope will visit Croatia on June 4-5, and travel to Spain on Aug. 18-21 to preside over World Youth Day celebrations. He will visit Germany on Sept. 22-25, the third trip to his homeland. German bishops have said the pope is likely to visit the capital city of Berlin as well as Freiburg and Erfurt.

The pope’s trip to Benin on Nov. 18-20 will be his second trip to Africa. In Benin, a small country in

West Africa, Catholics make up about 30 percent of the population, and Muslims comprise about 25 percent.

Pope Benedict, who will turn 84 in April, has to date made 18 trips abroad,



Pope Benedict XVI

12 of them in Europe. The pope’s travels inside Italy in 2011 will take him to the northern cities of Aquileia and Venice on May 7-8, to Montefeltro and the tiny Republic of San Marino on June 19, to the Adriatic city of Ancona on Sept. 11 for the National Eucharistic Congress, and to the southern cities of Lamezia Terme and Serra San Bruno on Oct. 9. †

Final Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes in several deaneries

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Advent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris

Indianapolis South Deanery
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist Daily, 11 a.m. at St. John the Evangelist

Indianapolis West Deanery
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel

New Albany Deanery
Dec. 19, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

CNS photo illustration/Bo Reiter



Advent, a season of joyful expectation before Christmas, began on Nov. 28. The Advent wreath, with a candle marking each week of the season, is a traditional symbol of the liturgical period.

Seymour Deanery
Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County †

The Incarnation: A myth that is also a fact

By John F. Fink

Is Christianity based on a myth?

Yes, indeed. As the great Christian apologist and author C. S. Lewis wrote, "The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact."

His coming to realize that contributed to his conversion from atheism.

A myth, according to my dictionary, is "a traditional story of ostensible historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief or natural phenomenon."

A second definition is "a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone."

According to these definitions, the story of the Incarnation, which we Christians celebrate on Christmas, certainly is a myth. It's a story that unfolds part of the world view of us Christians and is a belief centered on the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

However, unlike most myths of the ancient world that have come down to us, this myth actually happened. Before it became a myth, it was a historic fact.

The myth of the Incarnation is that the Son of God, while retaining his divinity, assumed our humanity, body and soul, and was born of the Virgin Mary to dwell in our midst in order to accomplish our redemption.

That person, both God and man, was also a historic person who was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod the Great.

Yes, skeptics will acknowledge, a man named Jesus lived during the first century of our common era and performed great signs. However, they argue, that doesn't mean that he was also God.

Perhaps not. For that, we must rely on what his first followers knew with certainty about him—that he performed signs which no human being could do.

No mere human being could change water into wine, multiply a few loaves and fish to feed thousands of people, walk on the Sea of Galilee, immediately cure the lame and the blind or, above all, rise from the dead.

These things, of course, were reported in the Gospels, but Jesus' followers knew beyond a doubt, decades before the Gospels were written, that he did them.

St. Paul's letters include Christian hymns and creeds that were already well known before he wrote the letters. He quoted one of them when he wrote to the Philippians that "Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard



A boy kisses a statue of the Christ Child at the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on Dec. 25, 2007.

equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness" (Phil 2:6-7).

The earliest Christians, therefore, believed in the Incarnation.

What was to become the great myth of Christianity became fact when the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. That, too, is often denied or doubted by modern thinkers because it's against the laws of nature.

Well, yes it is. Joseph obviously realized that since his first inclination was that Mary had been unfaithful to him, and "since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly" (Mt 1:19).

It took a visit from an angel in a dream

to convince him that "it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her" (Mt 1:20).

Both Matthew and Luke believed that

Mary's virginity was essential to the claim that Jesus is uniquely the Son of God. The fact that Jesus was conceived without the sperm of a man being involved was a miracle.

A miracle is the transcending of a law of nature resulting in an unexplained occurrence that glorifies God. By definition, it's against the laws of nature, just as

were those things mentioned a few paragraphs back that Jesus did while he was on Earth.

Miracles do occur whether or not you and I experience them. Of course, we do experience a miracle every time we see bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass.

Miracles do occur whether or not you and I experience them. Of course, we do experience a miracle every time we see bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass.

C. S. Lewis loved myths and studied them carefully. In his essay "Myth Became Fact," first published in the periodical *World Dominion* in 1944, he wrote: "Those who do not know that this great myth became fact when the Virgin conceived are, indeed, to be pitied. But Christians also need to be reminded that what became fact was a myth, that it carries with it into the world of fact all the properties of a myth. God is more than a god, not less; Christ is more than Balder [central figure of a Scandinavian myth], not less. We must not be ashamed of the mythical radiance resting on our theology."

Furthermore, he concluded, "For this is the marriage of heaven and earth: perfect myth and perfect fact: claiming not only our love and our obedience, but also our wonder and delight, addressed to the savage, the child and the poet in each one of us no less than to the moralist, the scholar, and the philosopher."

(John F. Fink is the editor emeritus of *The Criterion*.) †

At Christmas, Mary can help us to find peace in anxious times

By Mary Jo Pedersen
Catholic News Service

For many, Mary, the mother of Jesus, seems to be inaccessible to many women—without sin, perfect in every way, saying "yes" to God's will. How could most mothers relate to that image?

Honor Mary, yes. Pray through her powerful intercession, certainly. Look up to her with admiration, of course.

But imitate her in the daily hectic pace of mothering? Is it possible?

Reflections on Mary in the Christmas season can help us to understand how Mary's response to parenthood and the will of God was both extraordinary and ordinary.

Mary had the privilege of bringing Christ into the world, and every parent who gives birth to or adopts a child also has the privilege of bringing to life a new "image" of Christ in their children as they clean up, cook, carpool and instruct their kids.

Though there is little historical record of Mary's mothering, the Scriptures give us profound insights into how she was able to parent in line with God's will.

St. Luke tells us that at two critical parenting moments, Mary "kept all these things . . . in her heart." One time was when the shepherds announced that Jesus would be

the Messiah, and another time was when Jesus wandered away from his family at age 12, and was found in the temple in Jerusalem listening to and asking questions of the teachers of the Mosaic law (Lk 2:19, 51).

Any mother can relate to Mary's maternal struggle to figure out a child's behavior, and most would not take such experiences so calmly.

In a very ordinary way, Mary's wise response of keeping these life events in her heart helped the mystery of the Incarnation to unfold in human history.

Perhaps this is where Mary's giving birth to Jesus and our minor role can meet.

In the midst of busy days, we can learn to ponder and be still when we face improbable or disturbing circumstances instead of reacting with anxiety or anger or defensiveness.

Parenting for Mary and for us is part of a journey of faith. In pondering all these things, Mary was open to the Holy Spirit in her heart. Instead of immediately reacting, she teaches us to ponder the anxieties and challenges of daily life.

No parent will find this posture of pondering easy. Most of us want to quickly control the situation surrounding our lives and our children, and it is wise for us to do that to

some extent for their safety.

At the same time, however, taking time to be still and speak openly in prayer with God about our children, our future and daily worries is a prerequisite to doing what Mary did so well—allowing God to be born in our lives.

Mary was both a mother and a disciple of Jesus. We, too, are both parents and disciples. Today, as in first-century Palestine, God's will is mysteriously unfolding in our lives. Jesus reveals himself to us gradually, in very ordinary and sometimes disturbing circumstances—the diagnosis of an illness, a job loss or the unexpected news of trouble in the family.

Nothing that happens to us is outside of the love of God, and we always have the opportunity of allowing divine wisdom to guide and comfort us.

Mary's example shows us that. Maybe that is why we call her the Queen of Peace, and perhaps keeping things in our heart and pondering them is a way to bring peace into our lives and into the world.

(Mary Jo Pedersen, a veteran coordinator of marriage and family spirituality programs, lives in Omaha, Neb. She is the author of *For Better, for Worse, for God: Exploring the Holy Mystery of Marriage*, published by Loyola Press.) †



A stained-glass window at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto illustrates Mary kneeling in prayer before her infant son.

Readers share their favorite Christmas stories

A different kind of Christmas last year is a treasured memory

By Nancy O'Bryan

Special to *The Criterion*

The O'Bryan family has many family Christmas traditions, which usually begin over Thanksgiving weekend.

With at least two children away at college during the past eight years, the four-day Thanksgiving weekend is the only time that we can take the annual creative family photograph for the Christmas card, decorate the Christmas tree, and set up the outside lights and Nativity with the plastic, lighted figures that we have owned since the 1980s.

Also, traditionally, our son, Mitchell, always brought the Christ Child to this Nativity.

Mitchell was born with cerebral palsy, and could not walk or talk. He would always carry the plastic baby Jesus to its place in the manger with help from one of his siblings, who pushed his wheelchair, or his Dad, who carried him when he was younger.

Every Christmas Eve, the traditions continued with our faith and family. We always dressed in festive garb, which some people might call tacky Christmas sweaters.

We celebrated Christmas with our extended family during the afternoon on Christmas Eve, took our family picture in front of the tree—some pictures serious and others less serious with crazy hats and expressions—then attended the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

This has been our tradition since the children were young. Our family is always together to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus.

Last year, we did all of the usual Christmas Eve festivities—Christmas sweaters, a family dinner, the family photo in front of the Christmas tree before Mass, attended Mass, then came home and the kids watched a holiday movie together in the family room. Then we went to bed



Members of the O'Bryan family pose for a photo on Dec. 24, 2009, just hours before their beloved son and brother, Mitchell, went home to God early on Christmas morning.

after midnight.

Christmas morning came, and we were heartbroken to discover that Mitchell had died suddenly.

Mitchell had gone to heaven during the night—a Christmas saint. In God's loving wisdom, Mitchell had his "re-birth" day on Jesus' birthday, a day when our family was always together.

As Father Noah Casey, the pastor of St. Luke Parish, said during his homily at Mitchell's funeral Mass, "Jesus said to him, 'Hey, Mitchell, you've been carrying me for a long time. How about me carrying you?' And the Lord carried Mitchell into eternal life."

The devastating loss of our beloved son brought much outpouring of prayers and

support from our family, friends and faith community.

We soon learned that although we had always considered Mitchell our heart and inspiration, he was that and much more to so many people.

Mitchell taught us so much about love, patience and strength. Because of God's guiding hand, the faith of our family, and Mitchell's gentle strength and loving, patient spirit, we had him with us for almost 23 years.

This year, we have continued the O'Bryan traditions at Thanksgiving and plan to do so at Christmas.

We took our family Christmas photo at the median that we have adopted for Mitchell. "Mitchell's Median" is near our

neighborhood, west of Ditch Road on 86th Street. Our family project, planted with bushes, bulbs and perennials, is a living, blooming reminder of our wonderful son for all to enjoy.

We miss his crooked smile, the absolute joy he showed when our family was together, the peaceful look on his face each Sunday at Mass and his daily presence in our lives.

Christmas will be very different this year without Mitchell, but we know he is watching over all of us now and smiling at the really tacky sweaters we have chosen for this year's Christmas season.

(Nancy O'Bryan is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Father and son enjoyed helping Franciscan sisters decorate convent

By Michael Howell

Special to *The Criterion*

Some of my fondest memories while growing up in St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville were related to living across the street from the parish and school.

At the time, St. Gabriel School was staffed by the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis from Oldenburg.

For many years, my father was called upon by the superior to assist the sisters in decorating the convent for the Christmas season.

He had converted to the Catholic faith, and always considered it an honor that they would ask him for help during Advent.

Of course, Dad always had to have a helper and that was always me.

Dad would arrange a day with Sister Rose Ann, which he called his "day of fun with the nuns."

He would gather his ladder and tools, and we would ceremoniously walk across the street, where the sisters were anxiously awaiting our arrival.

First, we went to the basement to gather all the strands of Christmas lights, garland and ornaments. Each sister would carry some of the decorations, and off to the huge front porch we would go to start our decorating project.

The school custodian was kind enough to have already delivered four Christmas trees and live garland to the convent for Dad to work with as we decorated the convent inside and out.

I don't think they knew at the time, but Dad had nicknames for each sister. He enjoyed joking with the sister that he called "the cub bear."

She was a younger sister, who was light on her feet and had the heart of a child. While we decorated, she crawled in and out of windows in her long habit and laughed all the time.

Dad was in his element, smiling and singing with the sisters all joining him in song.

Sister Martha Clare helped him set up two Christmas trees on each corner of the porch then arrange a large tree on the balcony as well as another big tree inside the convent community room.

Once the trees were up, Dad had to wrap them in lights then the sisters would begin putting on the ornaments and garland.

Dad and I would go to the balcony and start hanging the live garland on the balcony porch.

When we were finished, with all the lights turned on, there were many appreciative "oohs" and "ahhs."

Dad would step back and smile as each sister hugged him for helping them make their home a little happier.

Although there are no sisters living in the convent now, I can't drive by it without thinking of the sisters and Dad decorating it.

Until he died, each year in early December my father would reminisce about his "days of fun with the nuns."

(Michael Howell is a member of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.) †

Honoring the Sabbath is greatest gift you can give yourself all year

By Martha Ardis

Special to *The Criterion*

When I was growing up, my family honored the Sabbath. This was a non-negotiable custom in our family.

Sundays started with church in the morning followed by Sunday lunch.

Then it began. No TV, no radio, no homework—this was done on Saturdays—and no chores whatsoever.

Our afternoons and evenings were spent in silence every Sunday.

I can remember my father, who was a very tall man, staring disdainfully down at me whenever I tried to renegotiate our Sabbath customs. I would always lose.

As with most things that my parents instilled in me, I did not begin to fully appreciate their wisdom until I realized that I had lost something.

A few years ago, my life was becoming an endless "To Do" List, and that list was taking over my life. I was strangely restless and not really satisfied with anything in my life.

A friend once told me that "God will get you where he wants you," and this adage rang true for me.

After struggling with that call to "go away and rest," God did get me where he wanted me to be.

I was welcomed by the Trappist monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Trappist, Ky., to rest my body, mind and soul in silence.

That special place gave me the opportunity to crank the "speedometer" way back and to reflect on my life. It also provided me with time to pray, and to finally listen to the things that God had been

waiting to tell me.

When I returned home, I was obsessed about how to reclaim the spiritual experience that I had enjoyed at the monastery.

My soul had tasted the living waters, and I realized that quiet, reflective time is what I needed in order to continue down the path.

It took me a while to finally connect the dots, but when I did the answer was always there—the Sabbath.

God created the world in six days and said, "It is good."

But the seventh day—the Sabbath—God made that day holy, and asked us to honor that day.

We all make choices in life, and those choices determine how we live our lives. It is not an easy choice to follow the road less traveled.

Choosing to honor the Sabbath, to take time to honor the day that God set "apart," is not for the weak of heart. It will take courage.

St. John of the Cross knew about the need for silence, and left us with these words: "The Father spoke one word, who was His Son, and this word He is always speaking in eternal silence. It is in silence that the soul must hear it."

I have never regretted returning to the weekly practice of honoring the Sabbath.

It might be constructed as a time for "doing nothing" by some people.

But "doing nothing" and just being ... with God, isn't that the greatest gift you can give yourself?

(Martha Ardis is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Late-night flower delivery brings special meaning to Christmas

By Karl Hertz
Special to *The Criterion*

In the early 1950s, I was a student at Cathedral High School, which at that time was located at 14th and Meridian streets in downtown Indianapolis. Now, the old school building is the archdiocese's Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center.

Around the holidays, I delivered flowers for the Drive-In Flower Mart on 16th Street. It was always an adventure.

One year, at Easter, they had all the delivery people dress in white bunny outfits.

Another year, on Christmas Eve, I arrived back at the shop at about 11 p.m. to tell the owners that I was going to Midnight Mass.

As I recall, the owners had gone to Cathedral High School at an earlier time so they knew it was important for me to go to church on Christmas Eve.

However, they said that they needed me to make one more delivery. This time, it was to the mental hospital at the medical center.

I knew that it was going to take me further away from Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis, where I planned to attend Midnight Mass.

I was late for Midnight Mass, but I have always thought that I had been in the right place. Fortunately for me, my folks agreed.

When I protested, they offered to call my folks and explain, but I did it myself. The flower arrangements were loaded, and off I went to the hospital.

On the way, I was very curious about my destination because I had never been in such a setting. It was a bleak place, especially on Christmas Eve. There was almost no staff to be found, and I was told to leave the flowers at the nurses' station.

As I proceeded to do this, several patients saw the flowers. Some of the patients wanted them and even followed me.

Finally, I told the people that I would set the flowers up at the nurses' station, and that they were for everyone to see but not to move them.

Actually, some of the people scared me.

As I left, the patients were pulling up chairs and sitting quietly to just look at the flowers at the nurses' station.

Merry Christmas, indeed!

I was late for Midnight Mass, but I have always thought that I had been in the right place. Fortunately for me, my folks agreed.

(Karl Hertz is a member of Lumen Christi Parish in Thiensville, Wis.) †



Adoration of the Magi

This image of the adoration of the Magi is found at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception at Conception Abbey in Conception, Mo. Painted by Benedictine monks in the late 1800s, the artwork is the first appearance of the German Beuronese style in a U.S. church.

Longtime friends looked forward to celebrating Christmas together

By Carolyn Bates-Greenman
Special to *The Criterion*

Our parents, who eventually became great-grandparents, were best friends with our godparents.

Now, only one is still living. Our mother is 87, and my sister and I enjoy visiting her.

Every Sunday during our childhood, we were in church together. Every other Friday, our dads enjoyed developing photographs together, which was their shared hobby, while our mothers spent time baking delicious desserts.

Christmas was always a special time for us, particularly when as grade school children we started attending Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. We did not exchange gifts because our

treasures were our dear friends.

About eight o'clock on Christmas Eve, our families would get together. Even as youngsters, we were allowed a cup of eggnog or a glass of wine with fruitcake or recently baked cookies. We felt so very grown up.

Around 10 o'clock, we would go to church for the choral prelude of Midnight Mass.

Thus, our many Christmases together were special.

Now, as grandparents ourselves, we fondly recall our early Christmas Eves as special times with dear friends when we celebrated Jesus' birth.

(Carolyn Bates-Greenman is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany.) †

Father's sudden death unites his grieving family in the Philippines

By Dr. Lydia Abad
Special to *The Criterion*

Dec. 13, 1983, is a memorable date for my family.

This was the day that my Mom and Dad flew back to the Philippines to take part in the nine-day novena called *Simbang Gabi*, an Advent custom which prepares Filipino Catholics for the birth of Jesus.

This starts on Dec. 16 at 4 a.m. with prayers and singing. After the

Mass, the people enjoy delicacies at different houses.

I would have liked them to spend Christmas with us since the last one was 17 years ago. I really wished we were together.

Well, we were together later because on the flight home Dad suffered a fatal heart attack so our family spent the Christmas season with Mom in the Philippines.

(Dr. Lydia Abad is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

St. Joseph is the Church's saint for all seasons and a model of faith



St. Joseph, who played a crucial role in salvation history, is the Church's saint for all seasons and has special relevance during Advent and Christmas.

By Sr. Joan Roccasalvo, C.S.J.
Catholic News Service

St. Joseph is the Church's saint for all seasons. His role in salvation history should not be underestimated, and this is particularly true during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

On discovering that Mary, his betrothed, was carrying a child that was not his, he pondered and worried. How could this have happened!

According to the law, the marriage had already taken place. They were betrothed, but they did not as yet live together.

Joseph refused to put Mary to shame. The law permitted him to divorce her. The law also permitted stoning an adulterous woman. But there had to be a better way.

It is important to understand that Joseph had no foreknowledge of Mary's divine pregnancy. He had to be told about it.

According to the prophecies, the Messiah would come from the house of David, Joseph's ancestral heritage. The

Book of Isaiah prophesied: "The virgin shall be with child" and "A shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse" (Is 7:14, 11:1).

Joseph's illustrious ancestry had its checkered past. King David cut a stunning figure of saint and sinner, and the four women mentioned in the family tree did not fare too well either. Mary's scandalous pregnancy would now be added to the list.

In the midst of an intractable dilemma came the angel's declaration to Joseph in a dream.

The father, presumably Joseph, would be responsible both for legitimizing the child and for naming him.

The angel consoled him: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:20-21).

When he awoke from the dream, he did as the angel bid him.

Who among us today would be so foolish?

Joseph's "yes" reiterated and confirmed Mary's acceptance of God's will for her. The assent of faith united belief and total commitment. The power of God moved Joseph to leave his own security to travel toward God's plan, even though, like Mary, he was free to refuse it.

Actions do speak much louder than words.

Joseph was a just man. Because he remained rooted in the Lord, he brought forth fruit: "The just man shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow" (Ps 92:13). The just are "like a tree planted near running water, that yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves never fade. [Whatever he does prospers]" (Ps 1:3).

(St. Joseph Sister Joan Roccasalvo earned doctorates in music and liturgical studies.) †

'A gesture filled with a lot of love'

Family helps Greenfield parish prepare for Christmas for more than 50 years

By Sean Gallagher

Families often have beloved and time-tested traditions around the holidays.

Some families gather each year to worship together at Midnight Mass. Some share meals inspired by recipes passed down from one generation to the next. Other families come together at a grandparent's house on Christmas Eve to exchange presents.

A special Christmas tradition of the children and grandchildren of Henry Von Essen, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, can be traced back all the way to New York City, where Henry, 83, grew up in the 1930s and 1940s.

Beginning to raise his family in the late 1950s, Henry decided to move out of New York. But he didn't exactly know where he wanted to put down roots.

"I got in a car with my brother and we were traveling out west," said Henry, who still boasts a clear New York accent. "That was in 1957. We got as far as Greenfield. And I said, 'I don't want to go out any further.'"

When asked why he chose Greenfield, Henry's answer was simple.

"The people were just beautiful," he said. "Everybody was so brotherly, you know?"

Henry and his family eventually made the move permanent, moving "lock, stock and barrel" to Greenfield in 1959.

Among his prized possessions that Henry brought to Indiana was a Nativity scene that he used to set up outside his home in New York. But storage space was limited in the home he was renting in Greenfield.

So shortly before Christmas in 1959, Henry called St. Michael's pastor at the time, Father Daniel Nolan.

"I called up Father Nolan and said, 'Father, I've got a beautiful Nativity set. ... Could I put it up for the church?'" Henry said. "He said, 'We've never had an outside Nativity. That'd be beautiful.'"

So Henry and his 5-year-old son, Larry, went over to the parish and set it up.

Henry's family has continued to put Nativity sets at the parish now for 51 consecutive years, a tradition old enough that it is on its third crèche scene.

According to Benedictine Father Severin Messick, St. Michael's current pastor, this tradition is still important.

"It's a small thing in the life of a parish," Father Severin said. "It's a small gesture in the [broader] scheme of things. But it's a gesture filled with a lot of love and devotion."

According to Larry, the tradition is also a sign of the deep faith of Henry, a faith that he has worked hard to pass on to his children and grandchildren.

"Your faith is the greatest gift that you can pass on down to your children," Larry said. "And doing this is a way of showing your faith. It makes you reflect on your grandfather, on your uncle—the previous generations and



Henry Von Essen, right, poses with members of his extended family last December after they put up a Nativity scene at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield for the 50th consecutive year. Posing with him before the Nativity are, from left, Vanessa, Larry, Joseph and Tony Von Essen, and Tim and Steve Kottlowski.

their faith and how that's carried on."

It's not the only way that Henry passed on the faith.

He taught his grandsons, Steve and Tim Kottlowski, now 20 and 18, how to be altar servers.

"I made the finest altar boys out of them that you've ever seen," Henry said with pride.

And during their middle and high school years, the brothers would work in the summer for their grandfather, who would teach them lessons about the faith during breaks.

"He would read us passages from his little missal book," Steve said. "He'd tell us to take a break, and he'd read us a passage or have us read it and explain it."

The hard work that Henry put in to plant seeds of faith in his children and grandchildren must be paying off. Steve has participated in two mission trips and regularly attends Sunday Mass at St. Michael Church.

In recent years, the task of putting up the Nativity set and other Christmas decorations around the parish church has largely been taken on by Larry, Steve and Tim. All are members of St. Michael Parish.

Tim is happy to carry on a family tradition. But he's also

pleased that he makes Christmas better for other families who come to St. Michael Church to celebrate the holiday.

"It's nice to put a smile on other people's faces," he said. "You can always hear people talking in church about the decorations and how nice they are. It's just nice to know that you've affected them in some way and brought them closer either to the Church or just to the spirit of Christmas."

Now the brothers, who are students at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, are looking forward to carrying on the tradition of putting up the Nativity set at St. Michael Parish well into the future.

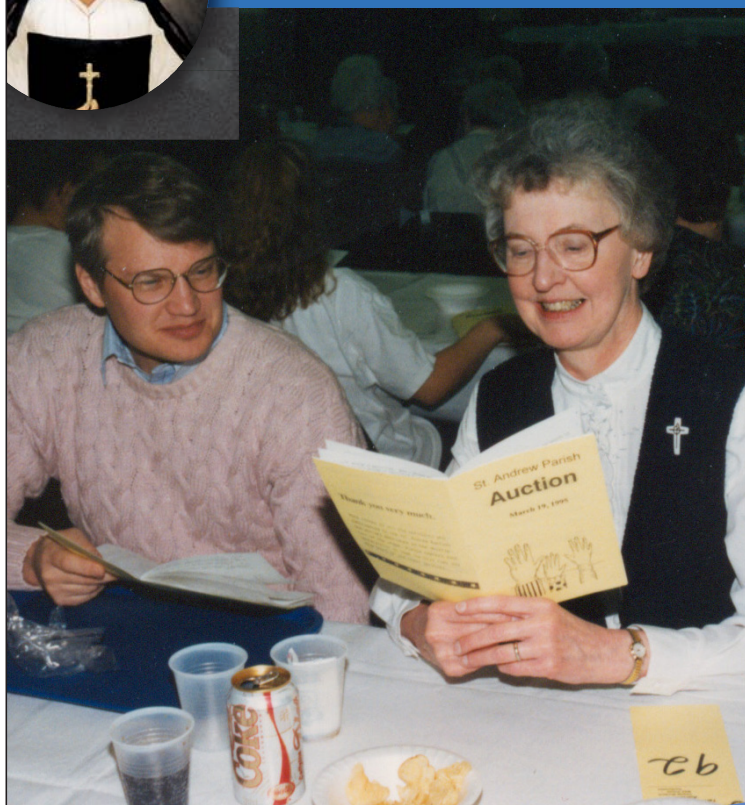
"Me and my brother are talking about carrying it on," Tim said. "We want to be engineers, and try and figure out how we could build a structure that would last a little bit longer and would be easier to move around."

At the same time, Tim realizes that he might, like his grandfather, move away. Yet wherever he goes, or even if he stays, he'll take his faith with him.

"Even if I did move," he said, "I'd probably figure out a way to get involved in another parish somewhere and maybe start my own tradition." †



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"When I came to Indianapolis in 1980, I began 24 years in parish ministry: at St. Mark the Evangelist and then at St. Andrew the Apostle. Working with the people of these two parishes was for me a profound experience of Church as the People of God. Their faith is deeply rooted in Jesus and their determination to make things happen for the greater good brought new life to those areas of the city. These were exciting yet humbling years of my life."

—Sister Marilyn Herber

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Honoring Mary



A firefighter climbs a ladder to place flowers beneath a statue of Mary high atop a column at the Spanish Steps in Rome on Dec. 8. Since 1857, firefighters have honored Mary with flowers on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.



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On behalf of *The Criterion* staff, we wish you and your family a blessed and safe holiday season.

Family's Christmases were frugal, but filled with love and fun times

By Theresa McHolland
Special to *The Criterion*

I have many good family Christmas memories from years past. Going back to 1944 when I was 10 years old, I can remember our Christmases as joyful and religious. Our Christmas celebration started with a procession. The youngest child carried the Baby Jesus to the crib while we sang "Silent Night." Dad would go out on Christmas Eve to find a tree because he could get one free. Then my parents would stay up half the night decorating it. Our family didn't have a lot of money, but we seemed to get everything we asked for each Christmas. Sometimes our gifts were second-hand clothing. Mother would sew new outfits for our dolls, and we were happy to have them. Our stockings were hung on the mantle, and had oranges and nuts in them, not candy. This was the only time when we got soda pop. What a treat that was for us!

One year, I prayed for a bicycle. I didn't get it and was so disappointed. I told my mother, and she said, "Sometimes God will give you something else in its place. You got a new baby sister instead."

My sister was born on Dec. 17, but I was not "a happy camper" because I wanted a bicycle.

I don't remember my parents exchanging gifts. I'm sure they made many sacrifices for us six children.

I wouldn't trade those Christmases for anything in the world.

(Theresa McHolland is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.) †

Parish 'caring tree' helps make Christmas special for gift giver

By Zola Ernstes
Special to *The Criterion*

I picked a name off of our parish "caring tree," said a little prayer, bought a small gift then made a friendly visit.

I thought about how happy the person would be, but never gave much thought about how happy it would make me.

Her eyes lit up, and so did mine.
It truly was Christmas time!

(Zola Ernstes is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County.) †



Papal blessing

A child holds a figurine of the baby Jesus as Pope Benedict XVI leads the Angelus prayer at the Vatican on Dec. 12. Children brought statues of the baby Jesus for the pope to bless during the papal audience.

Last Christmas spent with her father creates many special family memories for a lifetime

By Michelle Feltman
Special to *The Criterion*

Christmas 1998 was a very special Christmas for me as it was my last Christmas with my dad.

We were having our house built, and since my father had prostate cancer we decided to move in with him to help with his care.

That Christmas, we put up the silver tree with colorful lighting that we had not done since I was a little girl.

When we took it down after that Christmas season, he gave

me the tree, which I now put up every year in his memory.

That year, we also baked cookies with my kids and my dad, who baked Christmas cookies every year.

These are my most memorable moments with my dad, and I will always treasure them.

Dr. Mel Zimmermann, my dad, died in April 1999.

I love you, Dad, and I have written this reflection in your memory.

(Michelle Feltman is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Christ's gift of a moment of peace helps woman experience joy and love during Advent season

By Natalie Hoefler
Special to *The Criterion*

I had reached a spiritual low. Caught up in "doing," I lost touch with God's will.

Things finally imploded, and I found myself at adoration before the Blessed Sacrament with nothing to do but turn to God for guidance and direction.

Was I chastised for letting my relationship with God weaken? Of course not!

In my mind, I heard Christ say, "I'm so glad you're here! Now I can finally give you the love and guidance that you've been needing!"

Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament then gave me a gift of grace—a sense of peace and calm.

I sighed with relief and closed my eyes, and an image played itself out in my mind.

I was on a beach with nothing to do but relax, enjoy the warmth of the sun, the gentle and refreshing breeze, the play of the waves.

I realized exactly what each of these elements represented to me—the beach was Christ's peace, the waves were his mercy, the breeze was the Holy Spirit and the warmth was the unfathomable love that Christ has for me.

What bliss to just sit there and revel in accepting his gift of peace, mercy, Spirit and love!

Will the feeling last? Sadly, no—I'm human. But the gift of a spiritual beach vacation that Christ gave me while I prayed in his holy presence at adoration was a treasured moment of grace that, if I'm wise, I'll turn back to when I find I have placed my shivering self on an iceberg far from God's love.

I share this image in the hope that other people who are feeling overwhelmed can take a few minutes to revel in the joy and warmth of Christ's peace, mercy, Spirit and love.

(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

CHRIST'S COMING IN CHRISTMAS

Please join

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the pastor and parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
on

Christmas Eve

to celebrate Christ's coming in Christmas.

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Presider: Rev. Mr. Dustin Boehm

Midnight Mass

12:00 a.m.

Presider: Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



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May the peace and joy of the Christ Child be with you this Christmas season.

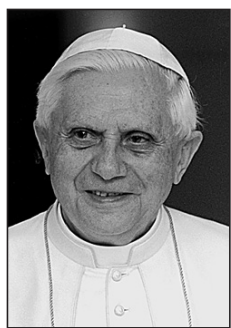
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Love and truth, not violent revolution, bring positive change, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Changing the world for the better does not come from



Pope Benedict XVI

leaders making grandiose promises or calling for a violent revolution, Pope Benedict XVI said. It comes from the humble individuals who silently carry God's light and love to everyone around them.

The pope made his remarks during a visit on Dec. 12 to a Rome parish that serves Italians from central and southern Italy as well as East European nations and other countries.

In his homily, the pope commented on the day's readings for the third Sunday of Advent, in which John the Baptist sends some messengers to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

The last two or three centuries have seen many people asking Jesus the same question, wondering if he really is the one who will change the world, the pope said.

"Many prophets, ideologues and dictators have come and said, 'It is not him. He did not change the world. It is us' who will do so through empires, dictatorships and totalitarian regimes, he said.

Such leaders did change the world, he said, but for the worse, and today "we know that nothing has come out of these great promises other than great emptiness and great destruction."

Jesus responds to the question, "Are you the one" by pointing to his good deeds of healing and proclaiming the Good News, the pope said.

The world will continue to see that "it is

not the violent revolution of the world, not the great promises that change the world, but the silent light of truth, the goodness of God that is the sign of his presence and that gives us certainty that we are completely loved and that we are not forgotten, that we are not a product of chance, but have been willed from love," he said.

The pope highlighted some of the men and women of the Church who have shined God's light on others: St. Maximilian Kolbe, who sacrificed his life to save the life of another; St. Damien de Veuster, who helped the oppressed and suffering; and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

The pope asked that people get closer to God so that they can be points of light for others.

Later that day, the pope recited the Angelus with pilgrims at St. Peter's Square.

The square was filled with children and families who brought statues of the baby Jesus for the pope to bless before placing them in Nativity scenes at home and at school.

Before blessing the figurines, the pope said listening to and reading sacred Scripture can help bring stability and direction in a world "that makes us feel invisible and every certainty seems to collapse."

The word of God is a compass that points the right way and is "an anchor to keep from going adrift," he said.

The pope said that the Advent season helps people cultivate greater patience and hope. Like the farmer who plants his seeds and patiently waits for the fruits to grow, the faithful need to have the farmer's same balance of faith and reason, the pope said.

On the one hand, he said, people must understand the laws of nature and work in harmony with them and, on the other, have faith in God's Providence, because some things are only in his hands. †

What was in the news on Dec. 16, 1960?

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of *The Criterion*, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.



Here are some of the items found in the Dec. 16, 1960, issue of *The Criterion*:

• Are Sunday closing laws legal? Supreme Court to decide issue

"WASHINGTON—Defenders and opponents of Sunday closing laws clashed for two days before the U.S. Supreme Court in a conflict whose outcome will have an impact wherever such laws are on the books. Supporters of the Sunday laws argued that they are necessary social measures designed to guarantee workers a weekly day of rest and to protect the community against the evils of seven-day-a-week business. But opponents contended the laws' real purpose is religious and that they violate the U.S. Constitution by protecting the Christian day of worship in preference to that of other religions."

• **From a photo caption:** "These four young people represent the thousands of archdiocesan Catholic youth who are actively campaigning to 'Put Christ Back Into Christmas.' Last year more than 20,000 stickers, posters and stamp books were distributed."

• Cuba church bombings branded Red reprisal

• **Pope deplors assaults on sanctity of family**

• Stimulus to Reading: Junior Gret Books now in third year

• Christianity in Sudan being slowly strangled

From a report by Rev. Pat O'Connor: "KHARTOUM, The Sudan—Sudanese Christians are undergoing a steady,

strangling persecution. Nothing equal to it has been waged anywhere outside communist-ruled countries in the postwar years. As under communist governments, this persecution in the Sudan is a gradual process, not a blazing, frontal attack. So churches are still open. One new church is being built. ... But in the south, where most of the Sudan's nearly 400,000 Christians live [three-fourths of them Catholics], the noose of religious persecution is drawn ever tighter."

• Council expected to begin in 1962

• Question Box: Are many changes planned for missal?

• Holy See lists days when Mass must be offered for the people

• Protestant church body appeals for racial justice

With this being the last issue of *The Criterion* this year, below are some other headlines that were found in the final two issues of 1960.

From the Dec. 23, 1960, issue:

- **Seek Christian unity with charity, Vatican official urges Catholics**
- **Archbishop Ritter is first Hoosier Cardinal**
- **Providence nuns to adopt new headdress Dec. 27**

From the Dec. 30, 1960, issue:

- **'Based on Poverty': Farm labor system called social blight**
- **The medical insurance controversy**
- **Catholic highlights of the past year**
- **Present missals usable, faithful are reminded**

(Read all of these stories from our Dec. 16, Dec. 23 and Dec. 30 issues from 1960 by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

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READINGS

continued from page 9

Monday, Dec. 27 (continued)

Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:1a, 2-8

Tuesday, Dec. 28

The Holy Innocents, martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2
Psalm 124:2-5, 7b-8
Matthew 2:13-18

Wednesday, Dec. 29

Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr
1 John 2:3-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 5-6
Luke 2:22-35

Thursday, Dec. 30

1 John 2:12-17
Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Friday, Dec. 31

Sylvester I, pope
1 John 2:18-21
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13
John 1:1-18

Saturday, Jan. 1

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Sunday, Jan. 2

The Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Monday, Jan. 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus
1 John 3:22-4:6
Psalm 2:7-8, 10-12a
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, Jan. 4

Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday, Jan. 5

John Neumann, bishop
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, Jan. 6

André Bessette, religious
1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalm 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday, Jan. 7

Raymond of Peñafort, priest
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, Jan. 8

1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b
John 3:22-30

Sunday, Jan. 9

The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10
Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17 †

TOP STORIES

continued from page 2

“The tumor is not related to the Hodgkin’s lymphoma that I had in 2008. My doctors believe the tumor is benign, and want to remove it as a precautionary measure.

“I’ve been told I may need four to five weeks of recovery time following the surgery.

“I do not expect the day-to-day operations of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to be greatly affected. We are blessed to have so many dedicated and hardworking clergy, religious and parish life coordinators as well as an excellent administrative staff. Our many ministries will continue as usual.”

The surgery was performed in April, and the archbishop made a full recovery.

6. A new bishop is chosen for the Diocese of Lafayette.

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty, previously a priest and health care ethicist for the Diocese of Rockford, Ill., was chosen by Pope Benedict XVI to be the new shepherd of the Diocese of Lafayette, which borders the archdiocese on the north.

He succeeded Bishop William L. Higi, 76, who had served as the leader of the Lafayette Diocese since 1984.

The episcopal ordination and installation of Bishop Doherty was celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Lafayette, and was attended by more than 700 people, 200 priests, 25 bishops and two cardinals.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein was the principal celebrant.

Kevin Cullen, the editor of *The Catholic Moment*, reported on the event: “In his homily, Archbishop Buechlein said, ‘Bishops are called to live the simple life of the Gospel in a way that somehow mirrors Jesus, the one who serves.’

“The Church needs us to be no-nonsense, down-to-earth, holy, spiritual and moral leaders who are who we claim to be,” he said. “With Jesus, in Jesus and for Jesus, that is the ultimate service, the ultimate witness to the unity of faith. God bless you, Bishop Doherty, with many fruitful years of living his call to holiness.”

7. Archdiocesan Catholics respond to the needs in Haiti.

From a Jan. 22 story written by Sean Gallagher:

“In the wake of the massive Jan. 12

earthquake in Haiti, parishes across the archdiocese that have done mission work there made initial plans to assist in the relief work in the impoverished island nation.

“The Archdiocese of Indianapolis as a whole is providing aid through second collections taken up in every parish on the weekends of Jan. 16-17 and Jan. 23-24. The money donated in these collections, taken up at the request of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, will be given to Catholic Relief Services, which is coordinating support from Church agencies around the world.

“Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville, Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg all have sister parishes in the northern part of Haiti that seem to have come out of the earthquake relatively unscathed.”

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, which has longstanding ties with a parish in Haiti, organized a 10-member medical trip outside the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

8. Archdiocese begins to prepare for changes in the Mass.

Beginning mid-year, the archdiocese began preparing priests, deacons and laity for coming changes to the English translation of the Mass, which will take effect on the weekend of Nov. 26-27, 2011—the First Sunday of Advent.

Father Patrick Beidelman, the archdiocesan director of liturgy, will help ministry leaders prepare for the change.

Sean Gallagher reported:

“Included among the ministry leaders that Father Beidelman and other archdiocesan Office of Worship staff members will meet with over the next 15 months are priests, deacons, deacon candidates, parish life coordinators, other lay parish staff members, and those involved in liturgical and music ministry.”

Video presentations on the new translation of the Mass, to be posted on the archdiocese’s website, will be geared for teachers, catechists, and those who minister to youths and young adults.

“My hope, as we work with those in leadership in our parish and school communities in the archdiocese,” Father Beidelman said, “is that they themselves will learn this new translation and come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of our



Newly ordained Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette receives his crozier from Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein of Indianapolis during the July 15 episcopal ordination and installation liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Lafayette, Ind.

worship of God in the Mass.’ ”

9. The Criterion celebrates its 50th anniversary.

From our staff report composed mostly by editor emeritus John F. Fink:

“In its Sept. 23, 1960, issue, this announcement appeared in *The Indiana Catholic*: ‘Archbishop [Paul C.] Schulte has announced that with this issue *The Indiana Catholic* ceases to be the official publication of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.’ ”

Two weeks later, on Oct. 7, 1960, *The Criterion* was published for the first time.

Msgr. Raymond T. Bosler, the founding editor of *The Criterion*, had been the editor of *The Indiana Catholic* for 13 years.

Where did the name *The Criterion* come from? Msgr. Bosler said that Father Paul Courtney came up with the name. Father Courtney was then a full-time professor at Marian College, who also wrote editorials for the newspaper. His editorial in the first issue explained the name. Here is an excerpt:

“*Webster’s Dictionary* says ‘criterion’ means ‘a standard of judging, a rule or test by which anything is tried in forming a correct judgment respecting it.’ In short—a standard. It may seem a trifle immodest to label as ‘*The Criterion*’ a paper in which we editors express our views about numerous subjects, but if our readers will only accept the unofficial character we claim for our editorial opinions, the title ‘*Criterion*’ won’t seem too arrogant.”

Our special coverage has included a decade-by-decade timeline of major news events, a four-page, pull-out section in October and an ongoing column looking at the news 50 years ago.

The Criterion has also started to post full

issues from the 1960s in its online archive.

10. Msgr. Richard Kavanagh, longest serving priest in the archdiocese, dies.

From a news story written by Sean Gallagher:

“Retired Msgr. Richard T. Kavanagh died on Jan. 20 at St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove. He was 98.”

Msgr. Kavanagh, who died of natural causes, had lived at the Hermitage since 1998.

At 73 years, he was the longest serving priest in the history of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, the pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, was the homilist during Msgr. Kavanagh’s funeral Mass.

“‘He was a really good pastor, a real gentleman, very inspiring,’ Msgr. Svarczkopf said. ‘I try to be like him, but I don’t think I’m making it.’ ”

Msgr. Kavanagh served as the administrator and pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis for more than 30 years.

He was active in the founding of the archdiocesan Catholic Youth Organization and the construction of the four interparochial high schools in Indianapolis. He also started the archdiocesan Office of Purchasing and guided the renovation of the former home of Cathedral High School into the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

(To read our original coverage for all of these stories, including additional links of interest, read this story on our website at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

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Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

ANDRES, Norbert J., Sr., 75, Holy Family, New Albany, Dec. 7. Husband of Shirley Ann (Carpenter) Andres. Father of Shelley and Norbert Andres Jr. Brother of Alberta Bertrand, Judy Bowe, Mildred Niehoff, Rita Nolot, Ann, Elmer and Melford Andres. Uncle of several.

BRAUN, Lester J., 89, Immaculate Conception, Millhousesen, Dec. 5. Stepfather of Mary Johnson and James Cloud. Brother of Thomas Braun. Grandfather of seven.

CARTER, Dolores P., 93, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Aunt of several.

FAIN, Lyle, 87, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Husband of LaVonne Fain. Father of Christina James, Joyce Renick, David and Gregory Fain. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of six.

GESWEIN, Elmer, 94, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 22. Husband of Edna Geswein. Father of Allen, Carl, James and John Geswein. Brother of Maurice Geswein. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of six.

HENLEY, Elizabeth M., 68, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Nov. 21. Wife of Joseph Henley. Mother of Jane, Laura and Matthew Henley. Foster mother of Ben Hart. Grandmother of six.

SCHWEGMAN, Walter F., 79, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Nov. 26. Husband of Marcella Schwegman. Father of Marcia Adams, Sandra Leffler, Debbie

Lux and Steve Schwegman. Brother of Bernice Harmeyer, Kathleen Knue, Lucille Weiler, Ben and Wilford Schwegman. Grandfather of six.

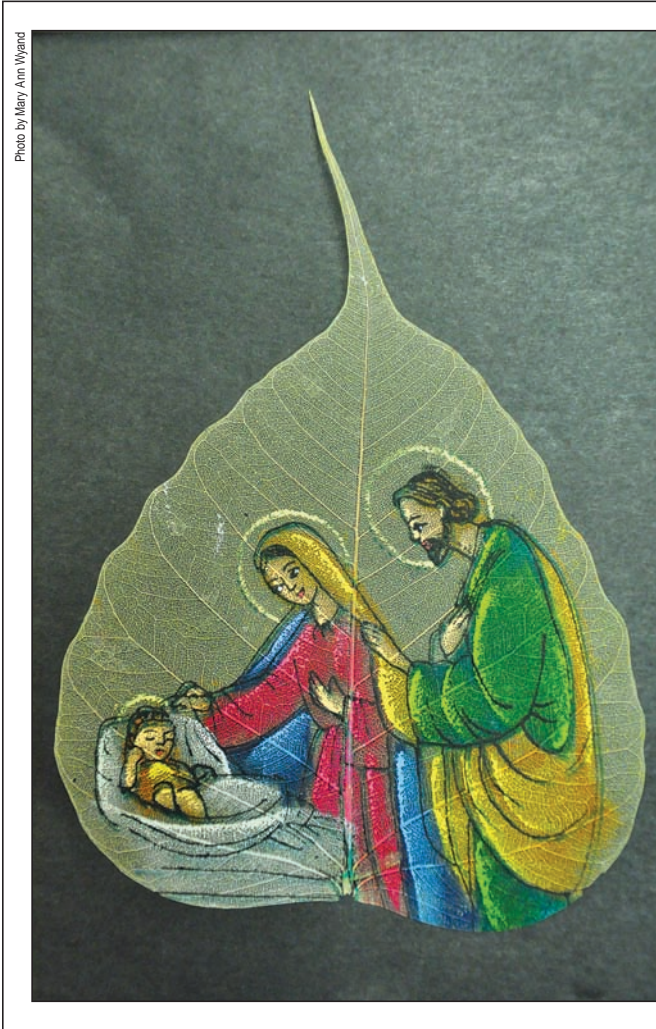
SIEGMAN, Betty R. (Sweeney), 78, Most Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 15. Mother of Cheryl Pride. Sister of Marilyn Wagner and Jerry Sweeney. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of three.

VESSLES, Elizabeth Jane, 80, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 20. Sister of William Vessels. Step-sister of Thelma Trent.

WEYBRIGHT, Mary E., 45, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Wife of Nicholas Weybright. Mother of Mea, Jack and Max Weybright. Daughter of Dan and Pat Schach. Sister of Chris, Mark and Rich Schach.

WHITAKER, Violet J., 86, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Aunt of several.

WIGGS, Augusta C., 98, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Nov. 10. Mother of Colleen Ataras, Cathy Mahaffey and Camille Osborn. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 17. †



Indian Nativity

An Indian artist's rendition of the Nativity is painted on a leaf from the pipul tree, which is known as the "tree of enlightenment" in India. The painting is on display at the archdiocesan Mission Office at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. The hand-painted Nativity scenes are created by jobless and handicapped youths at the PIME Missions in India.



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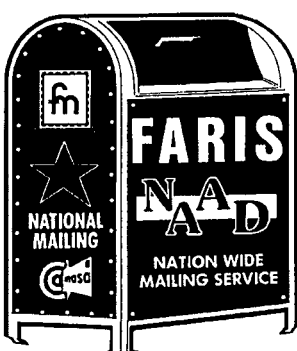
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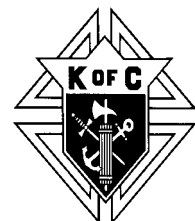


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Green Bay bishop becomes first in U.S. to approve Marian apparitions

CHAMPION, Wis. (CNS)—Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay has approved the Marian apparitions seen by Adele Brise in 1859, making the apparitions of Mary that occurred some 18 miles northeast of Green Bay the first in the United States to receive approval of a diocesan bishop.

Bishop Ricken made the announcement in Champion during Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help on Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

More than 250 invited guests filled the shrine chapel to hear Bishop Ricken read the official decree on the authenticity of the apparitions, although he also noted that the faithful are not obligated to believe that they are true. He also issued a second decree, formally approving the shrine as a diocesan shrine.

As he declared, "I do hereby approve these apparitions as worthy of belief," the congregation burst into applause, with many in attendance moved to tears.

"This is now an official declaration and an explicit recognition of what has been going on in the development and expression of people's faith in our Lord Jesus," Bishop Ricken said in his homily. "Mary always leads us to Jesus. We hold Mary in such high regard because she is the mother of our savior Jesus Christ. So she is probably the greatest evangelist and catechist who ever lived. ... She has been sent out all these years since Christ's death and resurrection to proclaim this good news."

Bishop Ricken said the proclamation was a desire of many people. "So many of you have asked for this in one way or another," he said. "I regard this also as a simple declaration in that it already states what has been going on here so quietly for so many years.

"I think today is a gift we give back to the Blessed Mother for all the prayers she has answered in this place. All the solace and comfort she has given to troubled souls," said Bishop Ricken.

"In many ways, it is also a thank-you gift to Adele Brise, that Belgian immigrant who came here to this country. ... We owe a great deal to her witness because she was simple, she was uneducated in our terms today. She was a humble soul, but she was obedient."

Bishop Ricken added that the message Brise answered in teaching children the faith is the same message people are called to today.

"We need this message today as much as they needed it 150 years ago; the message to proclaim the Gospel, each one of us, in our families and in our workplace. We need to have that same zeal for souls that Adele Brise had," he said.

Catholics must provide children "adequate catechetical formation" so they understand the Gospel, and "are able to defend and explain the teachings of the Church," he added.

The bishop's decree comes nearly two years after he opened a formal investigation into the apparitions. On Jan. 9, 2009, he appointed three theologians to study the case.

The theologians' names were not released by the diocese. But Father John Doerfler, vicar general and chancellor, said

all three had expertise in Marian theology and "general experience in examining apparitions," adding that two are internationally recognized.

Brise was 28 when Mary reportedly appeared to her three times in October 1859. The first appearance took place while Brise was carrying a sack of wheat to a grist mill about four miles from Robinsonville, now known as Champion.

A few days later, on Oct. 9, as Brise walked to Sunday Mass in Bay Settlement, about 11 miles from her home, Mary appeared to her again. After Mass, Brise told the pastor what she had seen. He told her to "ask in God's name who it was and what it desired of her," according to a historical account found on the shrine's website.

On the way home from Bay Settlement, Mary again appeared to Brise. When Brise asked who the woman was, Mary responded, "I am the Queen of Heaven, who prays for the conversion of sinners, and I wish you to do the same."

She told Brise to "gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation. Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the cross and how to approach the sacraments."

Brise devoted the rest of her life to teaching children. She began a community of secular Franciscans and built a school next to the shrine. Brise's father, Lambert, built a small chapel near the spot of the apparitions. When a brick chapel was built in 1880, the trees where Mary appeared were cut down and the chapel's altar was placed over the spot.

A school and convent were also built next to the chapel. The current chapel was dedicated in 1942 under the title of Our Lady of Good Help. Today, the shrine, which sits on six acres of farmland, receives thousands of visitors each year.

Brise died on July 5, 1896, and was buried in a small cemetery near the chapel. Although she was sometimes photographed in a habit, she never took vows as a religious.

Karen Tipps, who for 18 years has been a volunteer and caretaker of the shrine with her husband, Steve, said that Bishop Ricken's decree "is the fulfillment of everything we've worked for: to make the shrine a beautiful place of pilgrimage; to try and promote the message of what happened here."

While the declaration will not change the way longtime pilgrims view the shrine, it will change the way the rest of the world sees it, she said.

"The shrine has had pilgrims for more than 150 years ... but in the Church view and the world view, having the bishop go to this length to get the commission going, it's what others need for affirmation of what happened here," said Tipps.

She believes that the timing of the apparitions' approval was part of a divine plan.

"It's now because this message is meant for this time in history," Tipps told *The Compass*, Green Bay's diocesan newspaper. "If you look at the state of our children right now, there's no hope. There's no faith. There's nothing to live for."



Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., answers reporters' questions following a Mass on Dec. 8 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wis. At Mass Bishop Ricken announced that he approved Marian apparitions seen by Adele Brise. The shrine stands on the site where Mary reportedly appeared to her in 1859. They are the first apparitions of Mary in the U.S. to receive approval of a diocesan bishop.

She said a "crisis in catechesis" exists today, much like it did when Brise was told to teach children their catechism.

At a news conference in the shrine's crypt following Mass, Bishop Ricken said he has had a strong devotion to Mary since his childhood. "When I came and found that this shrine was dedicated to her and to her intercession, I was so pleased and happy to see that so many good things have come about here—story after story. It's living proof that something authentic is here."

Just across the room from where the bishop stood were dozens of crutches and canes left there by people who say they were cured through Mary's intercession.

Bishop Ricken said the diocese is in "the very beginning stages" of preparing for what could be a large turnout of pilgrims to the shrine now that the apparitions have been declared valid.

"We're also just trying to get through this phase of making the announcement and see how people respond," he added. †

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Employment

Parish Secretary

Our Lady of Lourdes is looking for a full time secretary to manage phones, welcome visitors & parishioners, maintain parish database, and handle other duties in a busy parish office. Candidates must have demonstrated ability to work successfully under the direction of more than one person, to multi-task and prioritize. The successful candidate will be welcoming, dependable, mature, self motivated, and will have the ability to work well under deadline. Must be skilled in Microsoft Office and experience with ACS or other database software is a plus. Please email résumé to chemmelgarn@seccina.org or fax to 356-2358.

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Director of Communications

St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church, a rapidly growing parish with 1,100 registered families and located in Zionsville Indiana, is seeking a full-time Director of Communication. The focus of this position will be to foster an awareness of a stewardship vision, to develop and direct a communications plan for the parish, and to collaboratively work with the parochial staff, leadership councils, volunteers of the parish and community liaisons.

Candidates must be a practicing Catholic, have a Bachelors degree or equivalent work experience in marketing and communications or a related field and have a minimum of five years of professional experience with a proven track record as a dynamic communicator. The ideal candidate will be energetic, self-motivated, proficient in current Microsoft technology software and have strong interpersonal, written, on-line, and public relations skills.

Qualified candidates should send a cover letter, résumé with references and a writing sample by December 31, 2010 to:

officemanager@zionsvillecatholic.com, or to
**St. Alphonsus Liguori Church, 1870 West Oak St,
Zionsville, IN 46077, Attention: Sonya Derocher.**

Our Lady of the Greenwood parishioners celebrate their 15th annual Mass honoring feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Mike Krokos

GREENWOOD—Manuel de la Rosa remembers the first solemn Mass held on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood in 1996.

Since he portrayed St. Juan Diego, a humble Aztec Indian to whom the Virgin Mary appeared at Tepeyac, Mexico, in 1531, it would be hard to forget.

“It was something that I really wanted to do,” recalled de la Rosa, who was a third-grade student at Our Lady of the Greenwood School at the time. “I was in a Spanish class of only about five children, and our teacher kind of introduced the idea of participating in the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass. I was pretty excited to be a part of that.”

“Then Martha McQueen [the chairperson of the Committee of Guadalupe] approached me personally, and asked me if I would like to represent Juan Diego at the Mass.”

Now a 23-year-old graduate student studying biology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, de la Rosa was among the more than 500 people who attended the 15th annual solemn Mass at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe, the “Patroness of the Americas,” on Dec. 10.

De la Rosa, who is of Filipino descent, said that the Virgin Mary continues to play a big role in his life of faith.

“One of my favorite prayers is the Hail Mary. Basically, I kind of look to Our Lady as a role model of faith, ... a role model in which she is able to reach the human race and bring people to her Son,” said the 2005 graduate of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “That is what she has always meant to me.”

The Dec. 10 bilingual Mass included readings in both English and Spanish. As in years past, the opening procession included individuals carrying flags from countries in North, South and Central America, an offering of roses from members of various parish ministries, members of the Bishop Chatard Assembly Honor Guard of the Knights of Columbus, and Committee of Guadalupe members carrying a framed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

During the Mass, children processed to the front of the church to place red roses on the steps leading to the altar, and McQueen also offered a reflection on the history of the Virgin Mary’s appearances to Juan Diego.

In his homily, Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, the pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, said that the Blessed Virgin appeared to a native American, Juan Diego, and her message was “one of hope, one of human dignity, one of equality that all people should live together and show each other extreme dignity because they were all equally loved by God. And all of them could look to Mary as a spiritual mother.”

“Mary promotes peace. She promotes justice. She promotes the human dignity of all of her children, no matter what their nationality, no matter what their customs or backgrounds,” he added. “It is one to unite us all.”

The annual solemn Mass was organized by the Committee of Guadalupe, whose members are from St. Rose of Lima, SS. Francis and Clare, St. Barnabas and Our Lady of the Greenwood parishes as well as students at Marian University and Roncalli High School.

Msgr. Svarczkopf also shared how the Committee of Guadalupe recently received a letter from officials at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City recognizing the annual celebration at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish “in union with all the Americas,” he said.

Tom Urrutia, a member of the Committee of Guadalupe, served as the bilingual liturgical master of ceremonies. A member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish since 1976, Urrutia’s grandfather moved from Puerto Rico to Pennsylvania and later to Indiana, where he worked as an interpreter for Eli Lilly and Company.

“I am so honored to do this,” he said of his part in the annual celebration, which has helped him appreciate and learn more about his heritage. “It has introduced me to the Virgin of Guadalupe. I [wear] a medal. Every morning, on the way to work, I pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe.” †



Members of the Committee of Guadalupe process into Our Lady of the Greenwood Church with a framed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 10 before the start of the 15th annual solemn Mass honoring the Patroness of the Americas. The frame that holds the image was hand-carved in Mexico.



Left, 9-year-old Manuel de la Rosa portrays St. Juan Diego during the first solemn Mass held on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church in 1996.

Below, now 23, Manuel de la Rosa places a red rose at the foot of the altar during the Dec. 10 liturgy honoring the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church.



Deacon Emilio Ferrer-Soto of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis proclaims the Gospel in Spanish during the Dec. 10 Mass.



Justin Smallstey and Nellie Nnatubeugo were among the young people who took part in the children’s offering of red roses during the Dec. 10 liturgy. Their costumes were made by members of the Committee of Guadalupe.



Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, the pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, prays the eucharistic prayer during the Dec. 10 Mass. Concelebrating priests include, from left, Father Mauro Rodas, Father John Hall, Father John Beitans, Conventual Franciscan Father Leopold Kessler, and Father Anthony Volz. Also shown at right is Deacon Emilio Ferrer-Soto.